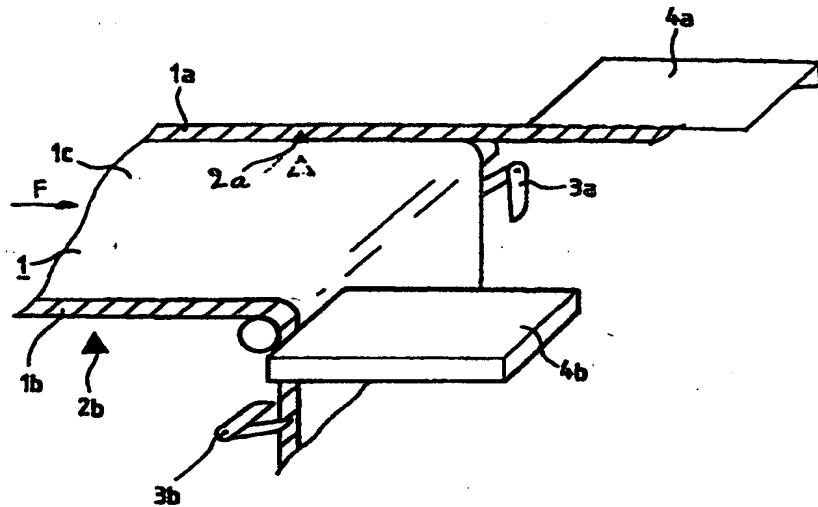


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(54) Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CUTTING OF A WEB, FEEDING IT INTO A PROCESSING LINE AND THREADING IT UP THROUGH THAT LINE



(57) Abstract

The invention relates to an apparatus for cutting of a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b), said apparatus comprising central cutting means (2a, 2b) for cutting the central portion (1c) laterally and transversely to the conveyance direction (F) and edge cutting means (3a, 3b) for cutting the edges (1a, 1b) transversely to the conveyance direction (F), said apparatus further comprising edge channels (4a, 4b) for taking up the edges (1a, 1b) into the processing line, said channels being substantially closed and comprising movable lids. The invention also provides a method for threading up a web in a processing line. The invention finally provides edge channels (4a, 4b).

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APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CUTTING OF A WEB,
FEEDING IT INTO A PROCESSING LINE AND
THREADING IT UP THROUGH THAT LINE

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to an apparatus and a method for cutting of a web, feeding it into a processing line, such as a winding unit, and threading it up through that line.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The feeding of the webs into a processing line, such as a winding system, after a start/restart of the production is a delicate process in particular for thin webs. A known method for such feeding is to cut off manually an edge or a 15 leader of the web, to take it manually through the processing line, launching a defined start program, and when the edge or the leader is secured on a driving element, to cut the web in such a way that the entirety thereof is finally fed into the processing line.

20

It will be readily apparent that there is a need for an apparatus and a method that would offer a safe and easy cutting and feeding of the web into the processing line, and that would afford automatic thread up. This need is 25 acute for films with thickness ranging from 100 to 0.4 microns and speeds up to 1000 m/min as well as widths ranging from 1 m to 10 m.

Said need exists for various types of material: 30 polymeric, paper, metallic, etc. "Web" shall thus cover any of this material.

The method of the leader (either manually or automatically) is already known and exemplified in, e.g., 35 United States patent 3,756,527 and 3,743,197. These patents teach the use of a single central leader strip that is inserted into the processing line; once said leader strip is secured the strip is broadened up to the full

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width of the web. The leader strip is transported pneumatically using a slotted tube. This, however, presents drawbacks. Because of the slots, it is not possible to build up a significant pressure gradient along the tube or channel; air speeds and consequently aerodynamic forces are limited. Pulling the leader strip out of the slots is a delicate operation, often ending in breaks with thin films. The tubes hinder the production because centrally located, along the whole line.

10

An alternate method using the edges present on both sides of the film or web is disclosed in United States patent 4,611,518. According to this document, the method makes use of said edges being first cut from the central part of the web, then fed into the processing line. The mechanism used for achieving this comprises pressure rolls, constituting a nip, which secures the edges, where the edges are then transported by a double belt (called rope scissors) through the machine. This, however, presents drawbacks. The edges can wrap around the pressure rolls, leading to downtime. The system is very complicated. Edge transport with pressure rolls and with a double belt is not convenient in the case of stretched polymeric films because the edge (aka bead) has then a non uniform thickness and may be corrugated and curled (as a result, the edge can get out sideways).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The object of the present invention is to provide an apparatus and a method for cutting and feeding a web in an appropriate manner for reliable automatic feeding and threading up in a processing line, such as in a winding system, thereby reducing the rate of failure and hence the production costs.

35

The invention thus provides an apparatus for cutting of a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing

line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b),
said apparatus comprising central cutting means (2a, 2b) for cutting the central portion (1c) laterally and
5 transversely to the conveyance direction (F) and edge cutting means (3a, 3b) for cutting the edges (1a, 1b) transversely to the conveyance direction (F),
said apparatus further comprising at least one edge channel (4a, 4b) for taking up the edge(s) (1a, 1b) into the
10 processing line and threading it (them) through that processing line, said channel(s) showing a section substantially closed and said channel(s) comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

15 According to one embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) comprise(s) rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b) for taking up and releasing the edges (1a, 1b).

20 According to another embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is (are) provided with pneumatically driven suction means.

25 According to yet another embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is (are) divided into sub-sections.

30 According to yet another embodiment, the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) and the corresponding edge cutting means (3a, 3b) are mounted jointly, such as on a carriage (8a, 8b).

According to yet another embodiment, the apparatus comprises two edge channels (4a, 4b).

35 According to yet another embodiment, the edge cutting means (3a, 3b) comprise knife means for cutting off the edges (1a, 1b). This knife means may be guillotine knives or shears knives.

According to yet another embodiment, the central cutting means (2a, 2b) are mounted to adopt a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c) and a moving state for transversely cutting the central portion (1c) while moving towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

According to yet another embodiment, the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the cutting means (2a, 2b).

According to yet another embodiment, the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged upstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

According to yet another embodiment, the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

"Processing line" includes one or several machines such as stretchers, coaters, dryers, surface treating machines, slitters, winders, etc., usually with very complicated film paths. A winding unit will receive the invention with advantage.

The invention also provides a method for cutting a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b),

the method comprising the steps of :

- (i) cutting off at least one edge (1a, 1b) laterally from the central portion (1c) ;
- 35 (ii) cutting said at least one edge (1a, 1b) along a direction transverse to the conveyance direction (F) ;
- (iii) taking up said at least one edge into the processing line through edge channel(s) ;

- (iv) securing said at least one edge in a pulling unit located at the other extremity of the processing line;
- (v) opening the channel(s) to release said at least one edge; and

5 (vi) cutting the central portion (1c).

According to one embodiment, the taking up step (iii) comprises sucking the edges into tube channels (4a, 4b).

10 According to another embodiment, the method further comprises the step of forming a loop of edges at the vicinity of the edge channel during step (ii).

15 According to yet another embodiment, both edges are processed; said both edges can be processed simultaneously or they can be processed independently or they can be processed sequentially.

20 According to yet another embodiment, the cutting step (i) comprises a step of keeping the central cutting means (2a, 2b) at a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c).

25 According to yet another embodiment, the cutting step (ii) comprises a step of instantaneous transversely cutting of the edges (1a, 1b).

30 According to yet another embodiment, the cutting step (vi) comprises moving the central cutting means (2a, 2b) towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

According to yet another embodiment, the method of the invention uses the apparatus of the invention.

35

The invention finally provides an edge channel (4a, 4b) showing a section substantially closed and comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

According to one embodiment, the edge channel (4a, 4b) comprises rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

5 According to another embodiment, the edge channel (4a, 4b) comprises air jets arranged along it.

10 The advantage of the apparatus and the method according to the present invention lies in the separated handling of the edges and the central portion of the web for the cutting procedure and feeding procedure, allowing appropriate (automatic) feeding of the web into the processing line, handling of the edges being carried out thanks to specific channels.

15 The invention allows the drawbacks of the prior art to be overcome, is not limited in terms of thickness or speed and show high reliability hence low downtime. The invention makes use of the fact that edges, in case of 20 polymeric films, are much stronger than the central part between them and thus break very seldom. If the web breaks during processing, the edges or only one of them will then automatically re-entrain the web.

25 The edges are known by-products of the manufacturing procedure of the web and distinguish from the central portion by their higher thickness (allowing handling of the web). The invention proposes to cut these two different components of the web in distinct steps by appropriate 30 means to allow for a different treatment of the components in the later feeding procedure.

35 Preferably the different cutting treatment of edges and central portion leads to a shape of the transverse cut of the web in such a way that the edges protrude in the conveyance direction. The edges, since they can be better handed, can be fed first into a pulling device or system

located at the other extremity of the processing line to entrain afterwards the central portion.

Further, it is possible to use cutting means different 5 in shape and operating procedure for the thin central portion and the thick edges. For instance, guillotine knives and shears knives are known as reliable tools for cutting thick but small workpieces and thus are adapted for cutting the edges. For the central portion extending in 10 general over a considerable width, other cutting means transversely movable are more appropriate, such as a Gillette knife or a doctor blade or sharpened needles.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

15 In the following, the edge channels will be represented with dotted lines for hidden parts at the first occurrence only in each embodiment.

20 Figures 1a and 1b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the web not being cut at all;

Figures 2a and 2b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being cut off laterally from the central portion of the web;

25 Figures 3a and 3b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being cut off transversely;

30 Figures 4a and 4b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being taken up by the edge channels;

35 Figures 5a and 5b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the edges being secured in the pulling device and the channels in open position;

Figures 6a and 6b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one

embodiment of the invention, the central portion being cut transversely;

5 Figures 7a and 7b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, the central portion being cut transversely up to the meeting point in the middle of the central part, and the central portion being taken in by the edge channels and fed to the processing line;

10 Figures 8a and 8b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the web not being cut at all;

15 Figures 9a and 9b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, one edge being cut off laterally from the central portion of the web;

20 Figures 10a and 10b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, where the edge channels are activated and the shears knife are also activated, for one given edge, whereby said edge forms a loop within the respective edge channel;

25 Figures 11a and 11b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to one embodiment of the invention, one edge being taken up by one edge channel;

30 Figures 12a and 12b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the one edge being taken up by the edge channels and secured in the pulling device;

Figures 13a, 13b to 16a, 16b correspond to figures 9a, 9b to 12a, 12b, respectively, for the other edge;

35 Figures 17a and 17b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the central portion being cut transversely;

Figures 18a and 18b show a perspective view and a top view, respectively, of an apparatus according to another embodiment of the invention, the central portion being

taken in by the edge channels and fed to the processing line;

Figure 19 shows a cross-sectional view of a preferred edge channels in the form of a edge channel with rotatable 5 half-part.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The description is given with respect to a web transfer an winding system following an oven or a stretcher but can 10 be applied to any web processing line. Also, the web is here polymeric, (e.g. polyester such as PET), with thickened edges (aka beads), by comparizon with the remaining web. The blades are arranged in such a way that the central portion, once cut, shows a uniform thickness.

15

First embodiment.

In the apparatus according to the invention as shown in Figs. 1a and 1b a web 1 is conveyed in a conveyance direction indicated by arrow F at the exit of an oven or 20 stretcher (not shown). The web is composed of two edges 1a and 1b defining therebetween a central portion 1c of the web 1. On its way along conveyance direction F the web 1 passes a central cutting means comprising two sharpened blades 2a, 2b. In the initial condition shown in Figs 1a 25 and 1b the blades are in a lower position not cutting the web. Downstream in the conveyance direction F edge cutting means in the form of two guillotine knifes 3a, 3b are mounted over each of the edges. In the present initial condition the guillotine knifes are in a stand-by state not cutting the edges 1a, 1b. Further downstream, edge channels 30 4a, 4b are placed in close vicinity of the transport roll towards the chute 5 to take up the edges 1a, 1b after cutting by the edge cutting means 3a, 3b. The edge channels 4a, 4b are not activated in the initial condition 35 shown in Figs. 1a and 1b and the entire web 1 is falling into the container or chute 5.

In operation the apparatus according to the first embodiment functions as follows :

At a given moment t_0 , as can be seen from figs. 2a and 5 2b, the blades 2a, 2b are lifted to a position where they protrude through the web between the edges and the central portion thus cutting the web into said central portion 1c and the two edges 1a and 1b. In this position the blades are not moved in the plane of the web, therefore being in a 10 non-moving state. Downstream of the blades the central portion and the separated edges continue to fall in the container 5.

At a selected moment $t_1 \leq t_0$, as can be seen from figs. 15 3a and 3b, the edges 1a, 1b are cut laterally by the edge cutting means 3a, 3b. The cut is performed instantaneously by the two guillotine knifes 3a and 3b, which are retracted immediately after cutting. The cutting is transverse to the conveyance direction F, preferably perpendicular to it.

20 At a further moment $t_2 \leq t_1$, as can be seen from figs. 4a and 4b, the edge channels 4a and 4b are activated to take up the cut edges. At this time the central portion 1c of the web continues to fall into the container 5, whereas 25 the cut edges 1a, 1b are taken into edge channels. The edge channels are "activated" in that sense that suction is initiated, e.g. through sucking means such as air jets arranged along the edge channels. Activation of the edge channels is initiated at a time t_2 close to t_1 , such that 30 the edges that will be taken up are that part of the edges that exit from the oven or stretcher (and not that part falling into the chute).

At a moment $t_3 \leq t_2$, as can be seen from figs. 5a and 35 5b, the edges are securely fed into the edge channels, or preferably are securely fed into a pulling unit situated at the other extremity of the processing line (not shown). At that time when the edges are secured in the pulling unit,

one could be sure that the edges will then efficiently perform their role of "entrainer", i.e. they will entrain the central part of the web into the winding unit. At that time, the lids of the edge channels are open, releasing the 5 edges. The edge channels are represented on the figs. without the bottom and inner parts thereof for the sake of understanding, representing the "open position" or "releasing position" of the channels. The edges may then "fall" on another film path, situated below the channels, 10 such as the film path of the processing line from which the web will be further handed.

At a moment $t_3' < t_3$, the channels may be retracted, if necessary, e.g. to allow the processing line to freely 15 operate.

At a moment $t_4 < t_3$, as can be seen from figs. 6a and 6b, the blades 2a, 2b start moving along line E in the plane of the web towards each other, in the instant case 20 towards the center of the web, thereby cutting the central portion 1c transversely. The blades 2a, 2b are caused to move transversely to the web conveyance direction at a time where the lids of the channels are open, so as to allow the central part to be entrained between the edges. The 25 attached V-shaped central portion 1c is then fed into the winding unit thanks to the protruding edges 1a, 1b, since these have been secured in the winding unit (e.g. through a driving roll acting as pulling device, not shown), and can securely entrain the central part of the web into the 30 winding unit.

At the moment of arrival of both blades in the center of the web, as can be seen from figs. 7a and 7b, the blades are withdrawn in position below the web to achieve a non- 35 cutting state preventing further cutting of the central portion. The blades are then moved to their initial position below the web near the edges. The result of the operation of the blades 2a, 2b leads to a V-shaped

transverse cut of the central part while the edges protrude in conveyance direction F. The angles have been exaggerated for sake of understanding; given the speed of the line, the angle of the cut piece shall be very acute.

5 In that configuration, it shall be understood that the steps represented figures 6 and 7 will be somehow "fused" together.

10 The edge cutting means and the central cutting means can be placed along the same line perpendicular to the conveyance direction, or they can be placed at different locations, preferably the edge cutting means (guillotine knives 3a, 3b) are located downstream with respect to the central part cutting means (blades 2a, 2b). The guillotine knives (3a, 3b) are preferably placed upstream with respect to the edge channels.

20 The sequence of the cutting and taking up steps and hence the moments in time t_0 , t_1 , t_2 , t_3 and t_4 can be varied, as will be appreciated by the skilled man. For example, activation of the guillotine knives should preferably be such that the latter be activated at a point of time where the web passing at the location of the guillotine knives is already cut by the blades into its central part and its edges. Activation of the guillotine knives and the edge channels may be coupled, i.e. they can be activated at the same time or at times separated by a set time-period. The moving of the blades 2a, 2b, for transverse cutting of the central portion, may be commanded 25 by the activation (opening) of the lids of the edge channels, optionally after a set time-period. Also, and preferably, the activation of the blades should be commanded by the detection of the secured feeding of the edges into the pulling device.

35

It is also possible to proceed with one edge at a time. In that case, one edge will be first secured in the pulling device, the lid of the first channel will be open, then the

second edge will be secured in the pulling device, and only by then the blades 2a and 2b will be moved towards each other. It is also possible to proceed with one edge only.

5 Second embodiment (and best mode).

The second embodiment is given with respect to that embodiment where each edge is handled separately. Of course, the second embodiment can be worked out with both edges handled simultaneously.

10

In the apparatus according to the invention as shown in Figs. 8a and 8b a web 1 is as in the first embodiment. On its way along conveyance direction F the web 1 passes a central cutting means comprising two sharpened blades 2a, 2b.

15 In the initial condition shown in Figs 8a and 8b the blades are in a lower position not cutting the web. Downstream in the conveyance direction F, in the vicinity of the roll diverting the web into the chute 5, are located edge channels 4a, 4b and further downstream are located the

20 edge cutting means in the form of two shears 3a, 3b. In the second embodiment, the edge channels and the shears are mounted jointly through a carriage 8a, 8b. The carriage 8a, 8b, allows for a well-defined placement of the edge channels with respect to the exiting web, in all three

25 directions. The carriage 8a, 8b, will only be represented in fig. 8a and 8b, and will not be represented in the following. In the present initial condition the shears are in a stand-by state (open position) not cutting the edges 1a, 1b. The edge channels 4a, 4b are not activated in the

30 initial condition shown in Figs. 8a and 8b and the entire web 1 is falling into the container or chute, which will no longer be represented in the figures in relation with the second embodiment.

35 In operation the apparatus according to the second embodiment functions as follows :

At a given moment t_{0a} , as can be seen from figs. 9a and 9b, the blade 2a is lifted to a position where it protrudes through the web between the edge and the central portion thus cutting the web into said central portion 1c and one edge 1a. In this position the blade is not moved in the plane of the web, therefore being in a non-moving state. Downstream of the blade the central portion and the separated edge continue to fall into the container 5.

At a moment $t_{1a} < t_{0a}$, as can be seen from figs. 10a and 10b, the edge 1a is cut laterally by the shears 3a. The cutting is not performed instantaneously as in the first embodiment, but will have a duration until moment t_{2a} . During that interval of time ($t_{2a} - t_{1a}$), the edge is "blocked" at the shears level, and since the film is still coming out from the oven or stretcher, a loop will build up with the incoming edge. The channel being activated, e.g. by suction means (not represented), the loop will form into the channel. The loop is represented by the dotted line and may extend into the channel by a distance that can be varied up to one meter or less or more. For example, $(t_{2a} - t_{1a})$ can be about 0.1 s, the speed of the film can be 5 m/s, thus the loop will have a length of 0.25 m. The suction means are not represented here but are conventional (see first embodiment).

At a moment $t_{2a} < t_{1a}$, as can be seen from figs. 11a and 11b, the edge 1a is finally cut by the shears 3a. The edge channel takes up (here sucks) the cut edge 1a. At this time the central portion 1c of the web and the edge 1b to which it is still attached continue to fall into the container 5. The edge channel is "activated" in the same sense as above (activation may be varied or not during transport of the edge). The edge 1a is then secured in the pulling device (not shown) or any other equivalent means of the driving unit.

At a further moment $t_3a _ t_2a$, as can be seen from figs. 12a and 12b, the lids of the edge channel 4a are open, releasing the edge; in fact the bottom and inner parts of the edge channels are not represented for the sake of understanding; further details can be seen on fig. 19. As in the first embodiment, the edge may "fall" onto another film path, and the channel 4a may be retracted.

The same sequence as above is then initiated for the other edge, at varying times t_{0b} , t_{1b} , t_{2b} , t_{3b} and t_{4b} , and is illustrated in figures 13a to 16b. At the end of the second sequence, the situation is the following: the two edges are transported through the processing line and secured in a pulling device situated at the other extremity, and they are ready to perform their role of entrainer.

It should be noted that the lids of the channel 4a can be open before the sequence for edge 1b starts, or it can be open after the sequence is completed, e.g. simultaneously with the lid of channel 1b. Also, the channels may be retracted if needed by the operation of the processing line (transport rolls to be moved at given positions, etc.).

25

At a moment $t_5 _ t_{4a}/t_{4b}$, as can be seen from figs. 17a and 17b, the blade 2b starts moving along line E in the plane of the web towards blade 2a, thus creating a movement of the blades towards each other, thereby cutting the central portion 1c transversely. The blade 2b is caused to move transversely to the web conveyance direction at a time where both edge channels are open. The open state is of course required for allowing the central part of the film to be fed into the winding unit (otherwise the tube-like channels would prevent the central part from being conveyed).

In the moment of arrival of blade 2b at the location of blade 2a at the border of the central part of the web, as can be seen from figs. 18a and 18b, the blades are withdrawn in position below the web to achieve a non-cutting state preventing further cutting of the central portion. The blades are then moved to their initial position below the web near the edges. The result of the operation of the blades 2a, 2b leads to a N-shaped transverse cut of the central part while the edges protrude in conveyance direction F. The attached N-shaped central portion 1c is then fed into the processing line thanks to the protruding edges 1a, 1b, acting as "entrainer". As indicated in the first embodiment, the angles have been exaggerated for sake of understanding; given the speed of the line, the angle of the cut piece shall be very acute. In that configuration, it shall be understood that the steps represented figures 17 and 18 will be somehow "fused" together.

As shown, the edge cutting means (shears 3a, 3b) are located downstream with respect to the central part cutting means (blades 2a, 2b). The shears (3a, 3b) are also located downstream with respect to the edge channels.

The sequence of the cutting, loop formation and taking up steps and hence the moments in time t0, t1, t2, t3 etc. can be varied. In the embodiment shown in figs. 8a to 15b, the following sequences can be obtained. Activation of the shears, and consequently formation of the loop should preferably be such that the shears be activated at a point of time where the web passing at the location of the shears is already cut by the blades into its central part and its edges. Activation of the shears and the edge channels may be coupled, i.e. they can be activated at the same time or at times separated by set time-period. The moving of the blade 2a (2b), for transverse cutting of the central portion, may be commanded by the activation of selected units of the apparatus (shears 3a, 3b; detection of the

secured feeding of said edges into the pulling device; opening of the lids of the channels; retraction of the channels), optionally after a set time-period, preferably at such time immediately before the processing line is in 5 production mode.

The following sequence is also possible:

- edge 1a is first threaded up as described above;
- blade 2b is lifted up (nothing else occurs);
- blade 2a moves towards blade 2b;
- as soon as blade 2a reaches blade 2b, both blades (2a, 2b) are withdrawn and shears 3b are activated simultaneously. The web central part 1c will then 15 entrain the edge 1b. Alternatively, shears 3b can be replaced with guillotine as in the first embodiment.

Fig. 19 shows a cross-sectional view of the edge channel. As shown, these edge channels (4a, 4b) can be 20 equipped with a rotatably mounted side comprised of inner and bottom parts 6a, 7a and 6b, 7b, respectively, these rotatably mounted sides engaging/releasing the edges. Said rotatably mounted side can be either the inner part, the bottom part or both. In case the rotatably mounted side is 25 the inner part 6a, 6b (facing each other), the edge channels will be converted into horizontal U-shaped guides, allowing the entire web to be driven between them. The edge channels can then be retracted laterally. In case the rotatably mounted side is the bottom part 7a, 7b (facing 30 down), the edge channels will be converted into vertical U-shaped guides (with the opening facing down), and in order for the web to be properly conveyed, it will fall at a position situated below the edge channels. The edge channels can then be retracted upwards. Preferably, the 35 rotatably sides may be comprised of both the inner and bottom parts of the edge channels. This latter embodiment is shown in fig. 19, where the dotted line represents the position where the inner and bottom parts are open. The

lids may also be comprised of three sides of the channel. Also, the movable lids may be moved by translation, instead of by rotation. The edge may thus get out upwards, downwards, sideways or diagonally.

5

The channels are activated thanks to, e.g. air jets, pneumatically driven. The proper number of air jets is arranged along the channel. The channel need not be of one piece; it can comprise several sub-units which may be spaced or close each to the other. The air jets may be comprised of a Venturi tube arranged at the end of the channel. The Venturi is fed with pressurized air that will entrain ambient air at high speed through the channel, which ambient air will ultimately convey the edge.

15

The channel edges represented figs. 1a through 15b can be at a level within the conveyance direction F, or they can be oriented with respect to same, either upwards or downwards, and/or they can be shifted upwards or downwards with respect to the web plane. For example, the edge channels can form with the conveyance direction any angle (for from 15 to 30°), upwards, and can be shifted upwards (e.g. according to a vertical position) with respect to the web plane. Also, since the width of the web can be modified, the edge channels are preferably mounted on a carriage that will place them at the appropriate position to accommodate the width of the web, as described in figs. 8a to 14a. The carriage will also preferably carry the cutting knifes (3a, 3b) when the edge channels and the cutting knifes (e.g. the shears) are mounted jointly.

With a cutting means such as a high speed laser beam or pressurized water beam the placement with respect to the conveyance direction and within the apparatus and the sequence of the cutting steps can be modified appropriately.

While the description has been given with respect to specific embodiments (blades, guillotine, shears, scissors, edge channels), it is clear that the invention is not limited to these embodiments. Also, the two embodiments 5 disclosed can be combined as far as one or more steps are concerned.

While the description has been given with respect to the handling of the two edges, it is clear that the 10 invention can be worked out with only one edge. The skilled man will appreciate any adaptation of the above description to achieve the invention with one edge only.

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for cutting of a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b), said apparatus comprising central cutting means (2a, 2b) for cutting the central portion (1c) laterally and transversely to the conveyance direction (F) and edge cutting means (3a, 3b) for cutting the edges (1a, 1b) transversely to the conveyance direction (F), said apparatus further comprising at least one edge channel (4a, 4b) for taking up the edge(s) (1a, 1b) into the processing line and threading it (them) through that processing line, said channel(s) showing a section substantially closed and said channel(s) comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).
2. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 1, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) comprise(s) rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b) for taking up and releasing the edges (1a, 1b).
3. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is(are) provided with pneumatically driven suction means.
4. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) is(are) divided into sub-sections.
5. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) and the corresponding edge cutting means (3a, 3b) are mounted jointly.

6. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 5, wherein the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b) and the edge cutting means (3a, 3b) are mounted jointly on a carriage (8a, 8b).

5

7. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 6, comprising two edge channels (4a, 4b).

10 8. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the edge cutting means (3a, 3b) comprise knife means for cutting off the edges (1a, 1b).

15 9. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 8, wherein the knife means (3a, 3b) are guillotine knives.

20 10. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 8, wherein the knife means (3a, 3b) are shears knives.

25 11. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the central cutting means (2a, 2b) are mounted to adopt a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c) and a moving state for transversely cutting the central portion (1c) while moving towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

30

12. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the cutting means (2a, 2b).

35

13. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the cutting means

(3a, 3b) are arranged upstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

14. Apparatus for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the cutting means (3a, 3b) are arranged downstream with respect to the edge channel(s) (4a, 4b).

15. A method for cutting a web (1) conveyed along a conveyance direction (F), and subsequent feeding and threading it up into a processing line, said web (1) comprising a central portion (1c) and edges (1a, 1b), the method comprising the steps of :

- (i) cutting off at least one edge (1a, 1b) laterally from the central portion (1c) ;
- (ii) cutting said at least one edge (1a, 1b) along a direction transverse to the conveyance direction (F) ;
- (iii) taking up said at least one edge into the processing line through edge channel(s);
- (iv) securing said at least one edge in a pulling unit located at the other extremity of the processing line;
- (v) opening the channel(s) to release said at least one edge; and
- (vi) cutting the central portion (1c).

16. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 15, wherein the taking up step (iii) comprises sucking the edges into tube channels (4a, 4b).

17. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 15 or 16, further comprising the step of forming a loop of edges at the vicinity of the edge channel during step (ii).

18. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 17, wherein both edges are processed.

19. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 18, wherein said both edges are processed simultaneously.

5 20. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 18, wherein said both edges are processed independently.

10 21. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to claim 20, wherein said both edges are processed sequentially.

15 22. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 21, wherein the cutting step (i) comprises a step of keeping the central cutting means (2a, 2b) at a non-moving state for lateral cutting off the edges (1a, 1b) from the central portion (1c).

20 23. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 22, wherein the cutting step (ii) comprises a step of instantaneous transversely cutting of the edges (1a, 1b).

25 24. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 23, wherein the cutting step (vi) comprises moving the central cutting means (2a, 2b) towards each other transversely to the conveyance direction (F).

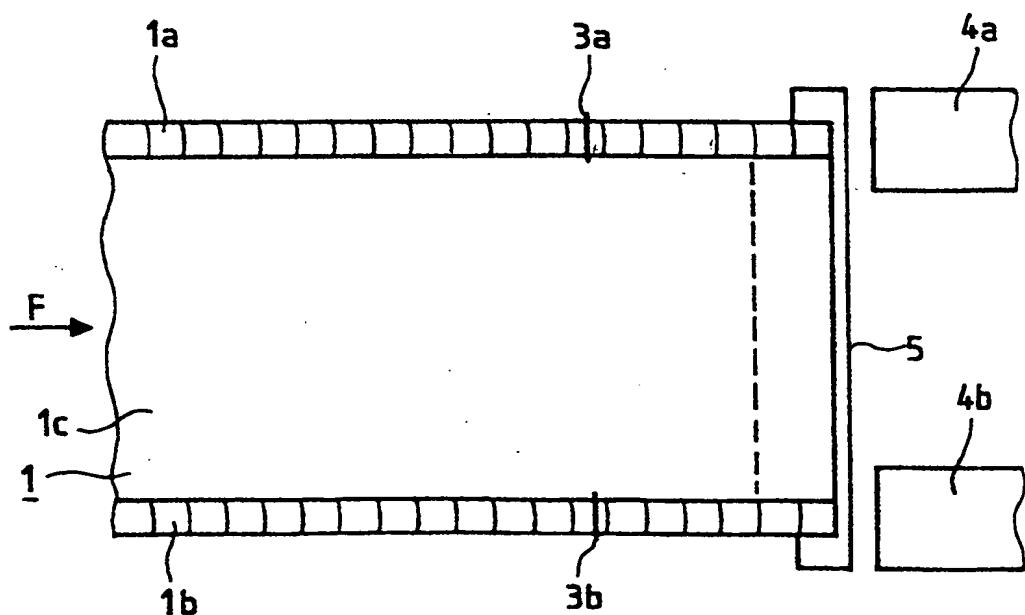
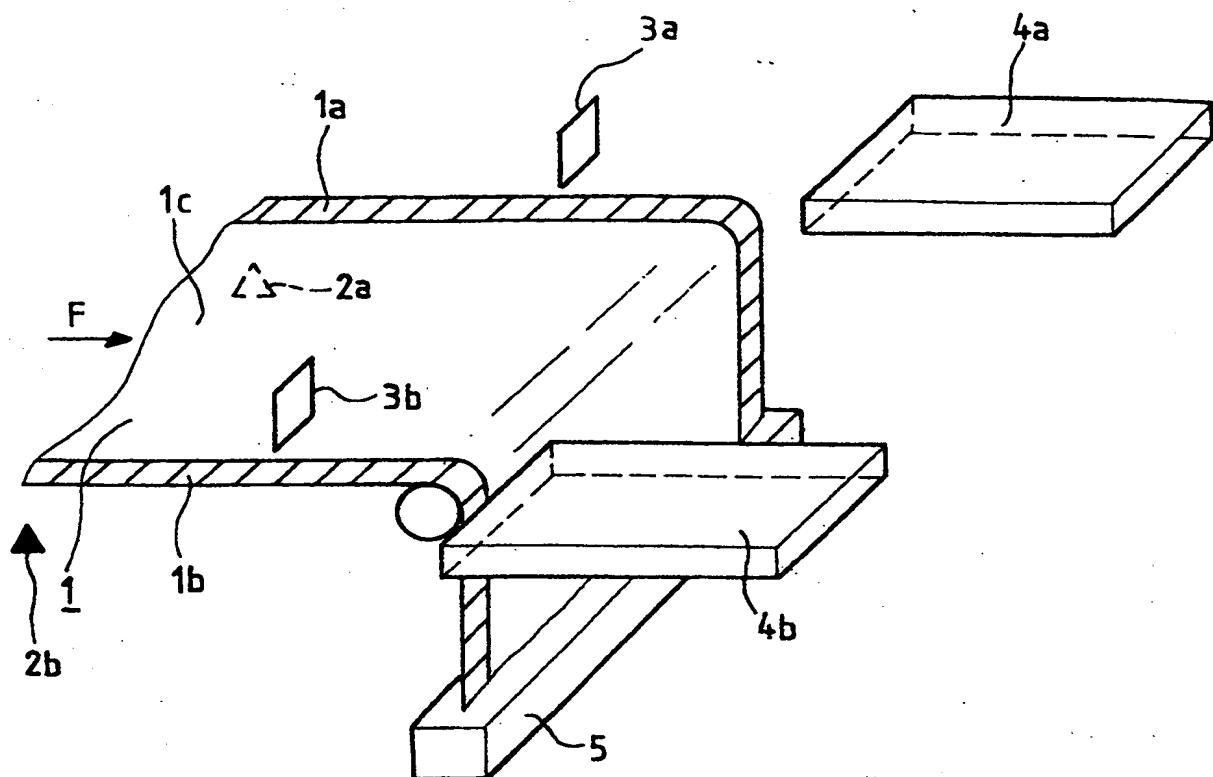
30 25. Method for cutting and feeding a web (1) according to any one of claims 15 to 24, using the apparatus of any one of claims 1 to 14.

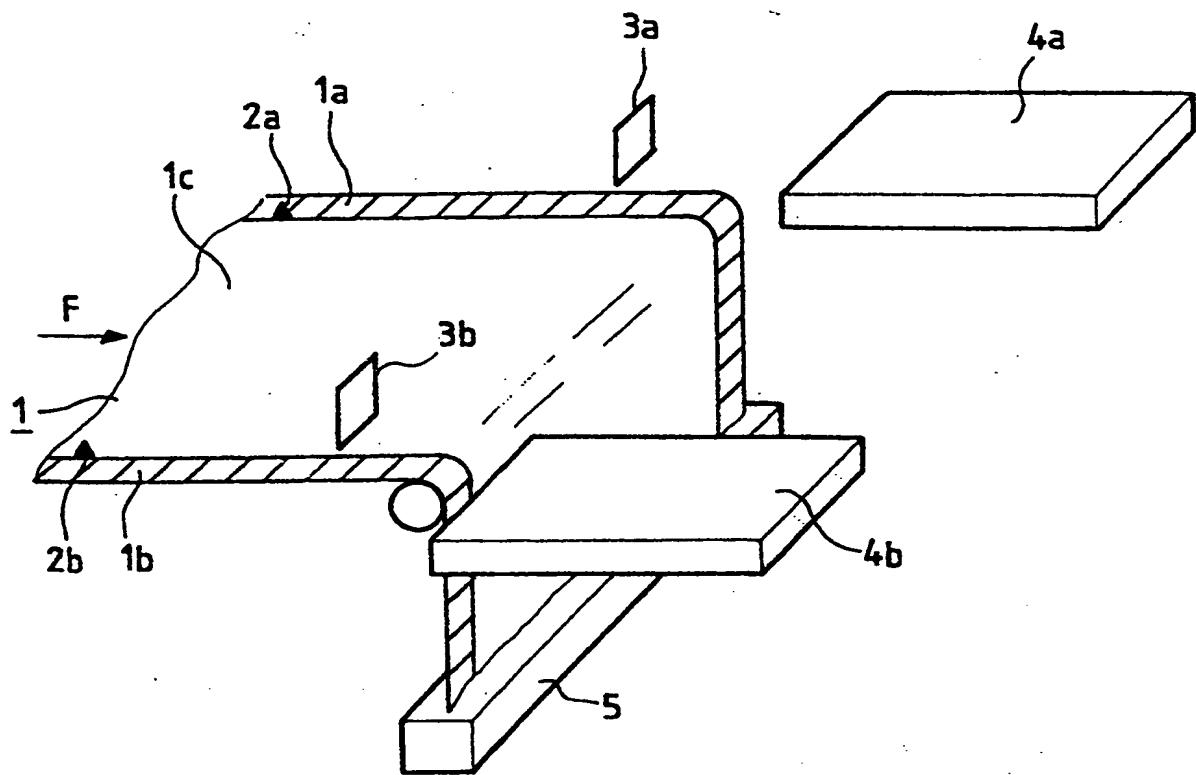
26. Edge channel (4a, 4b) showing a section substantially closed and comprising movable lids (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

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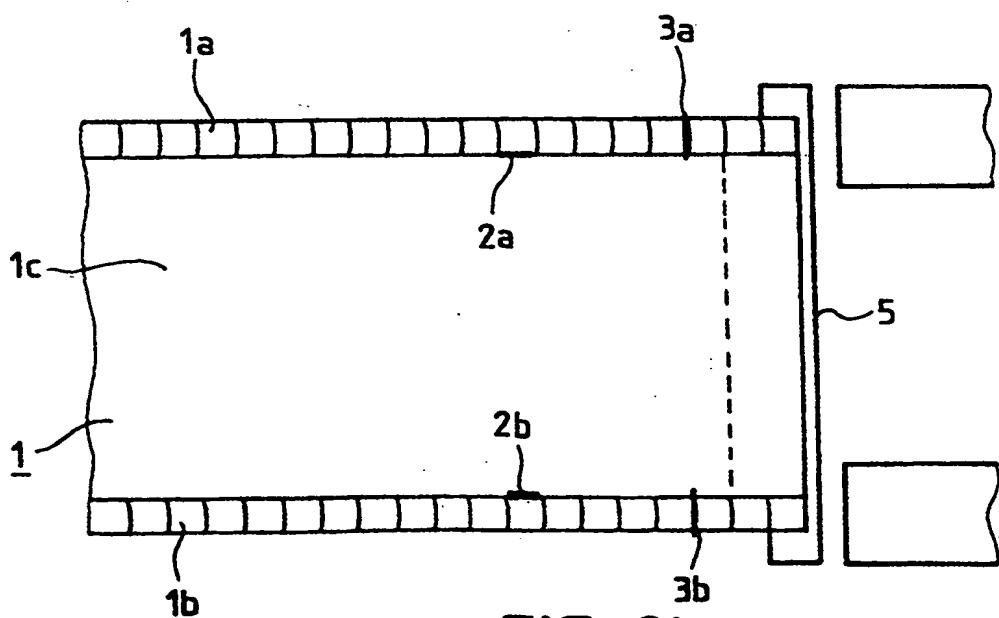
27. Edge channel (4a, 4b) according to claim 26, comprising rotatably mounted inner and/or bottom plate (6a, 7a, 6b, 7b).

28. Edge channel (4a, 4b) according to claim 26 or 27,
comprising air jets arranged along it.

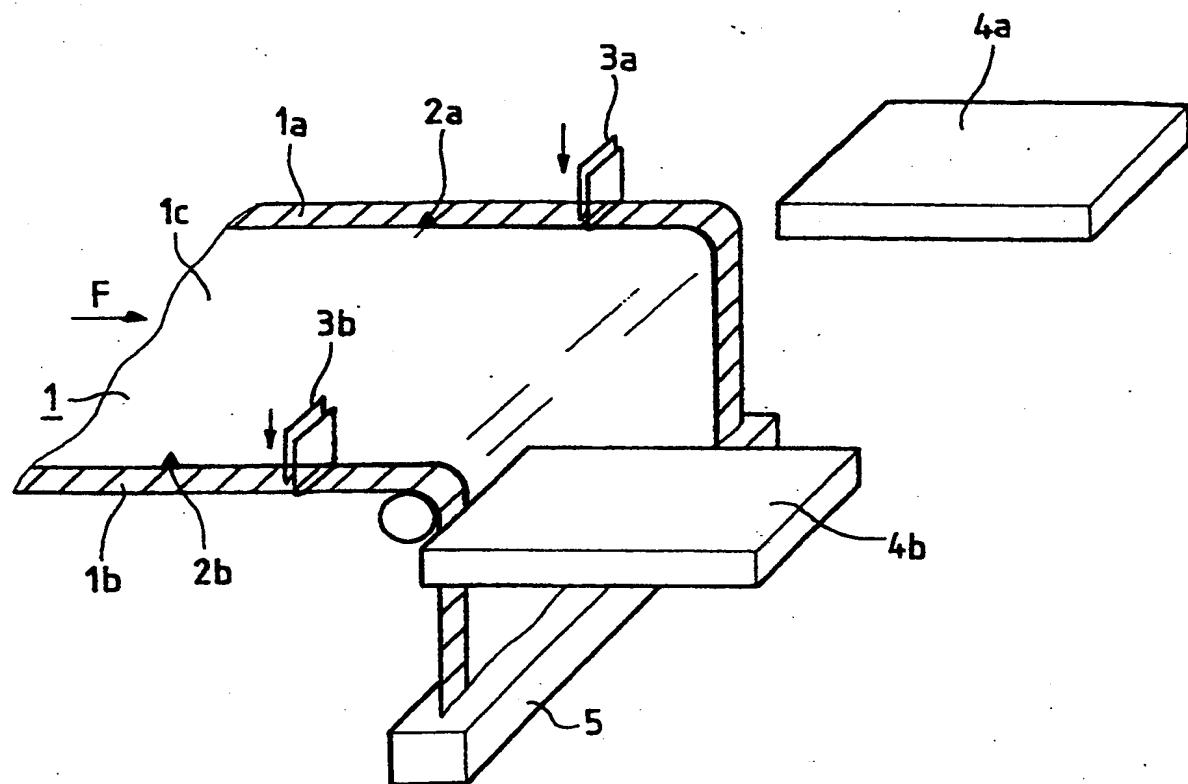




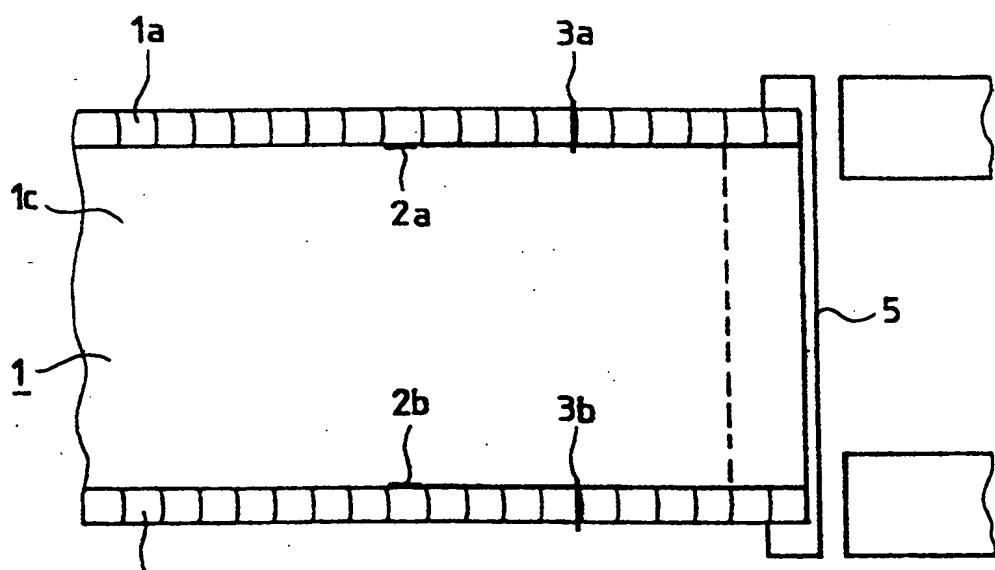
FIG_2a



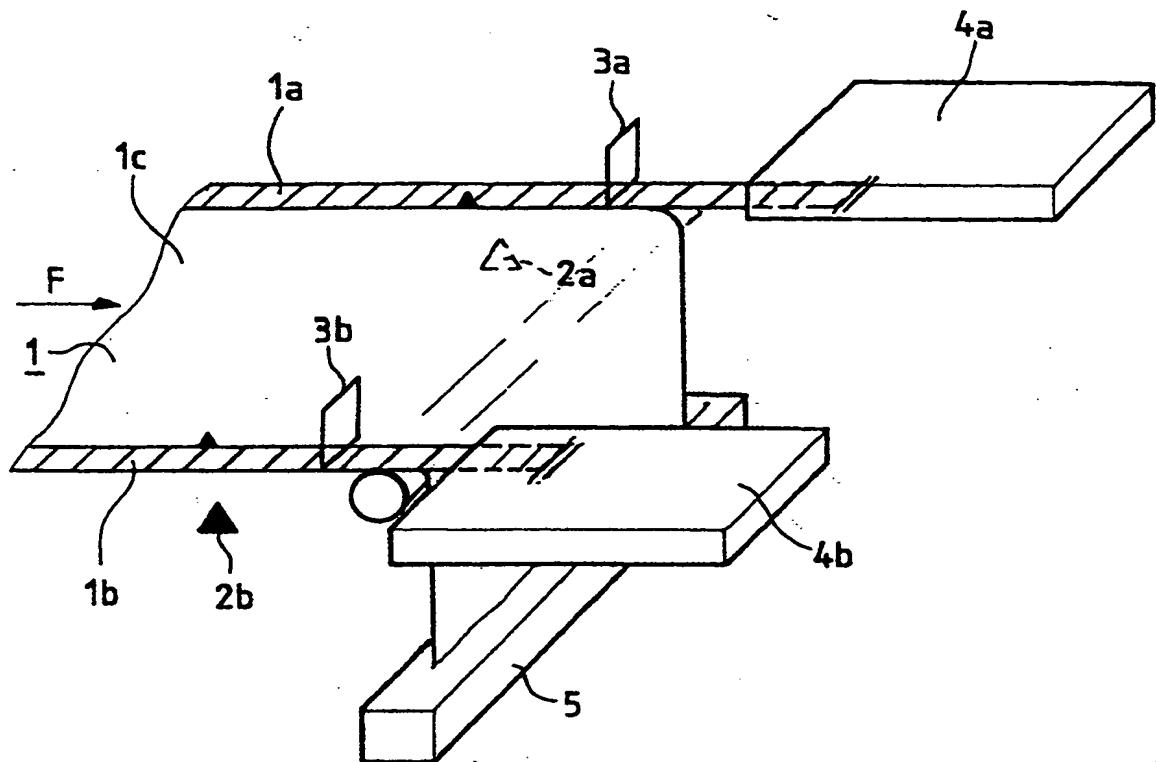
FIG_2b



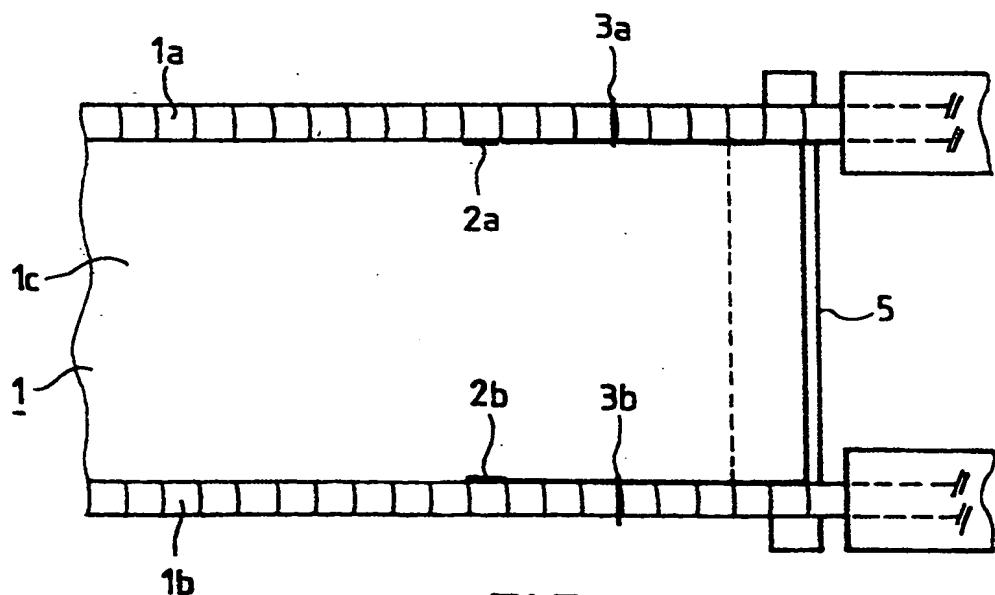
FIG_3a



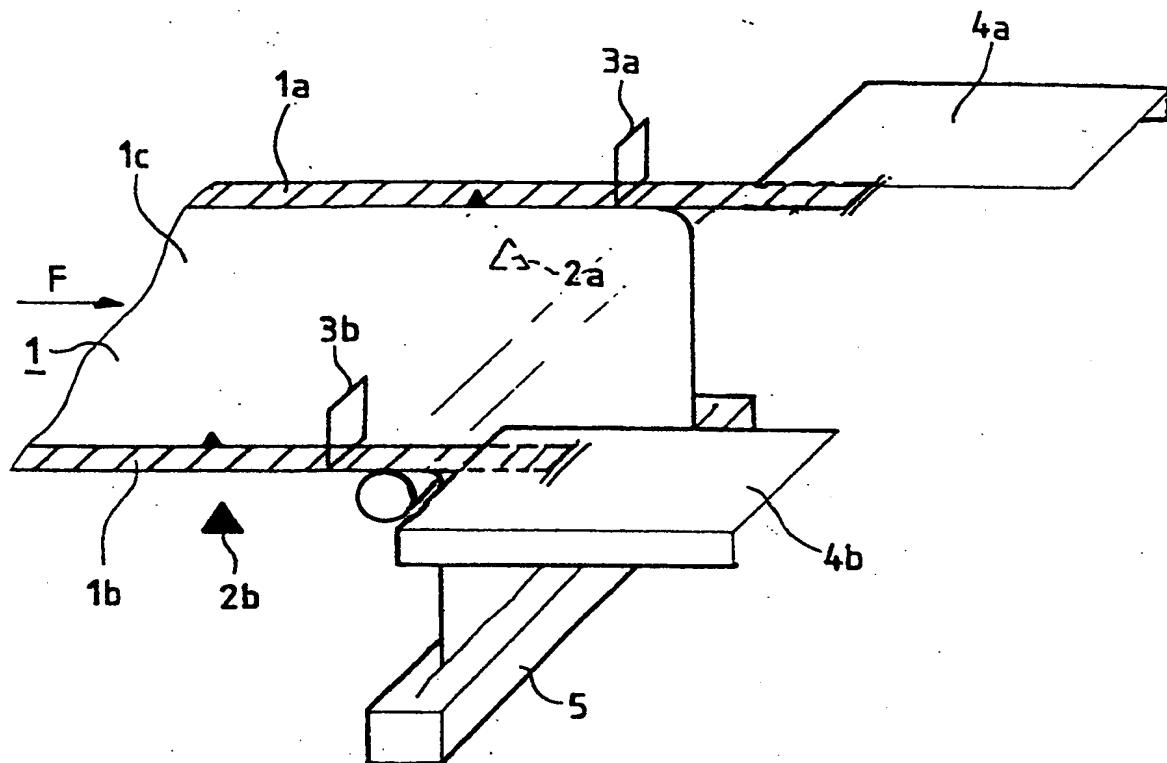
FIG_3b



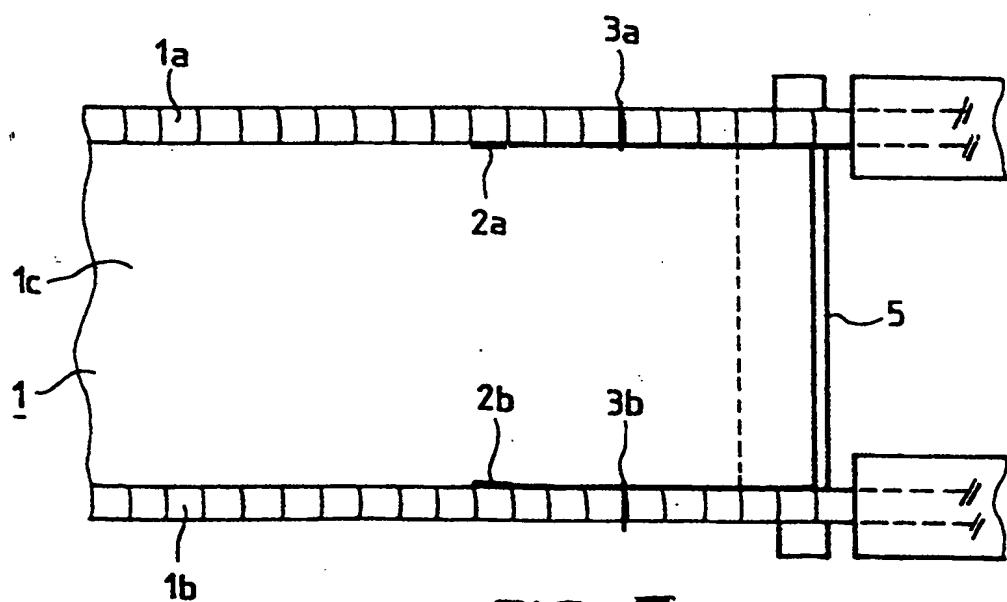
FIG_4a



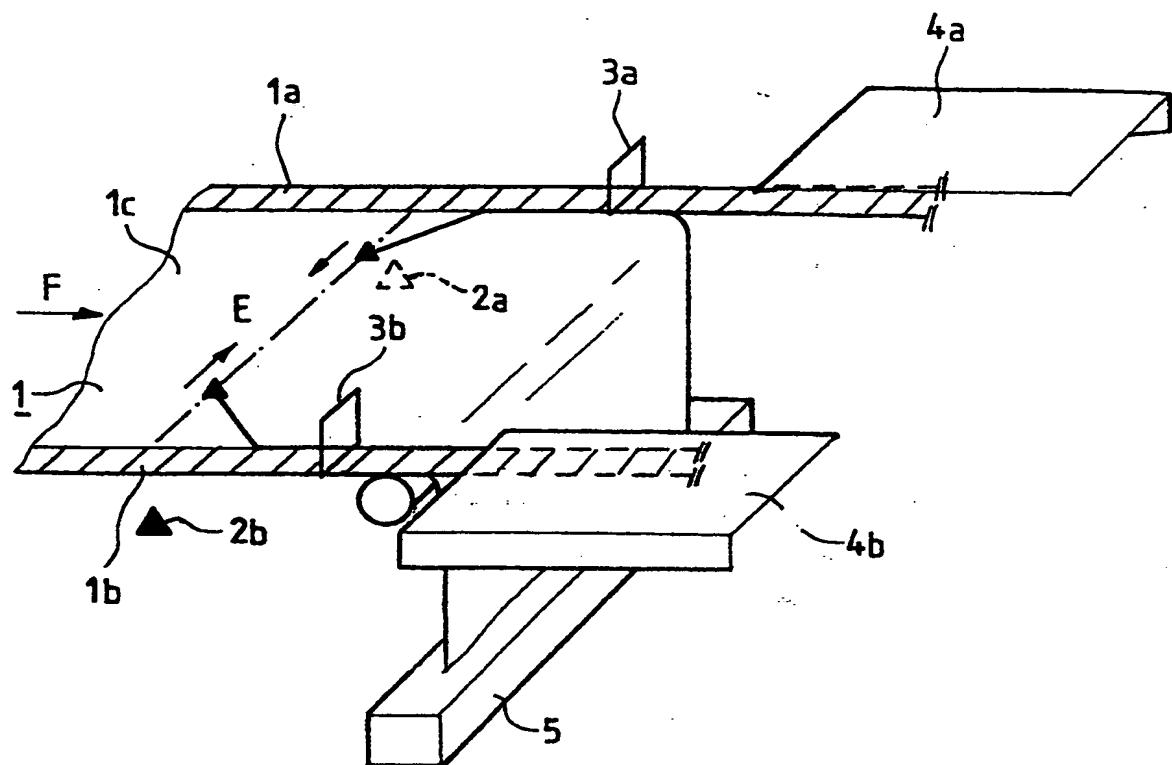
FIG_4b



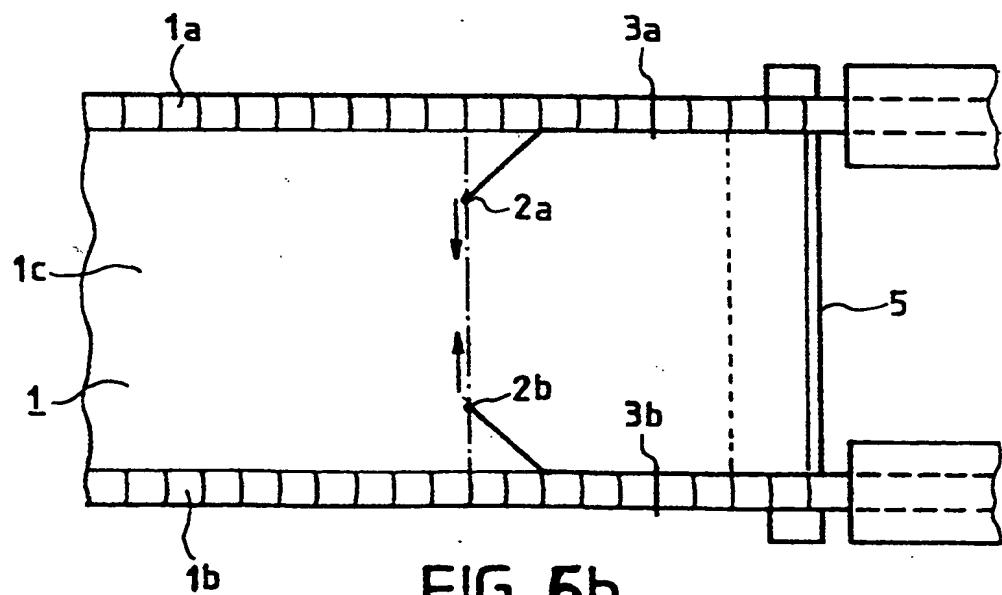
FIG_5a



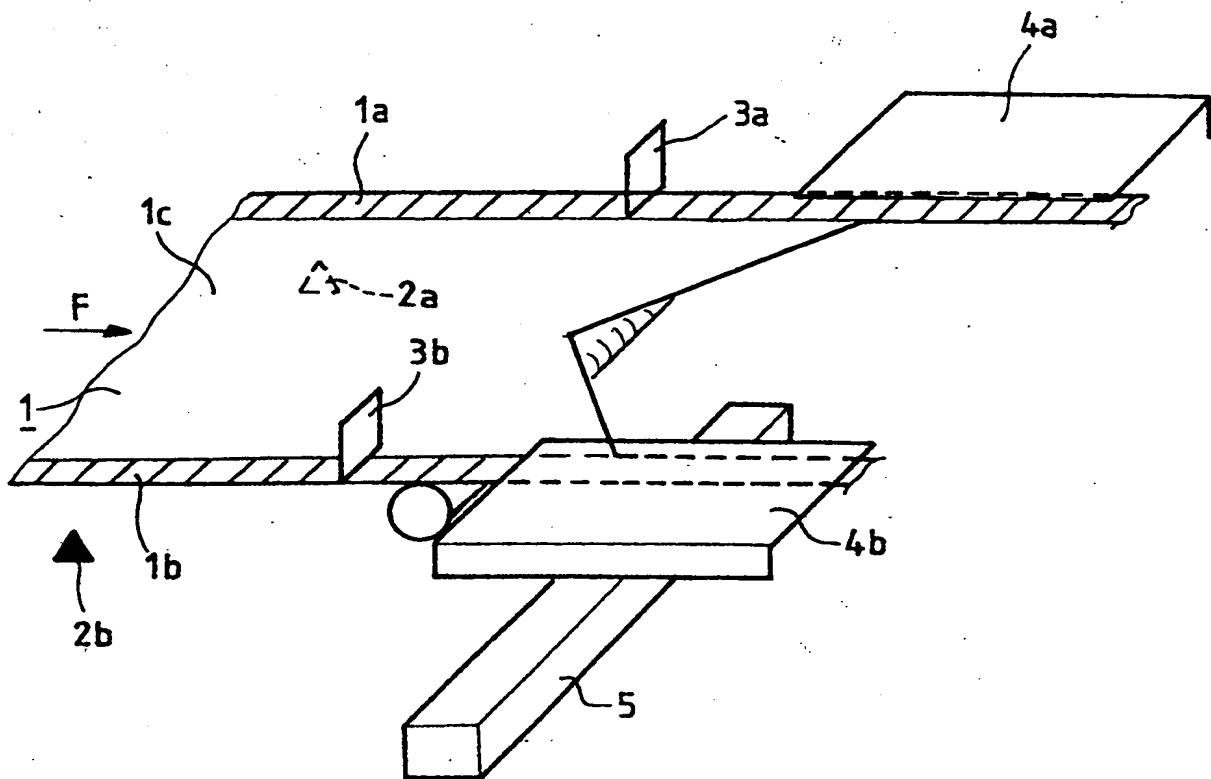
FIG_5b



FIG_5a



FIG_5b



FIG_7a

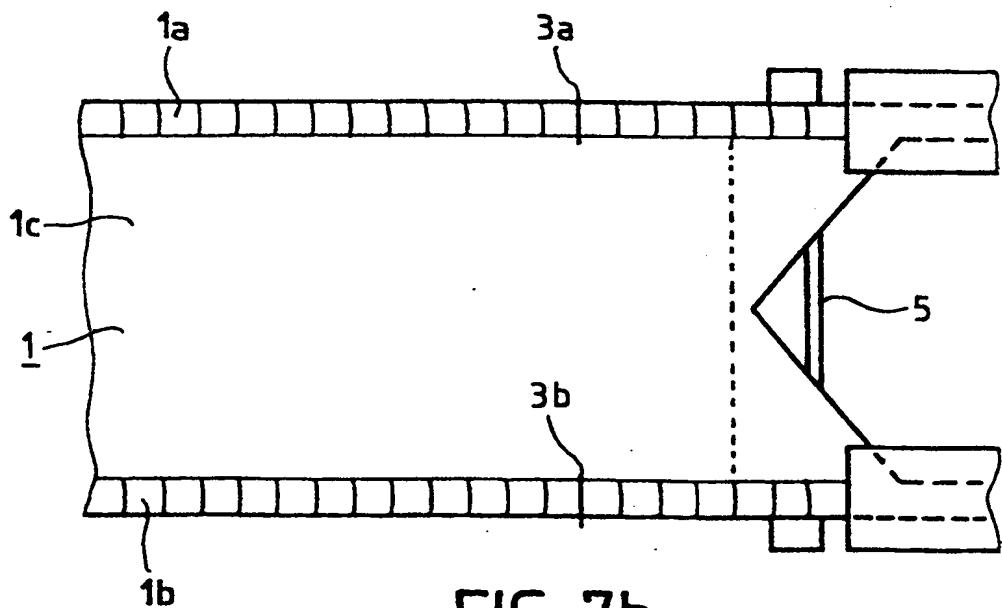
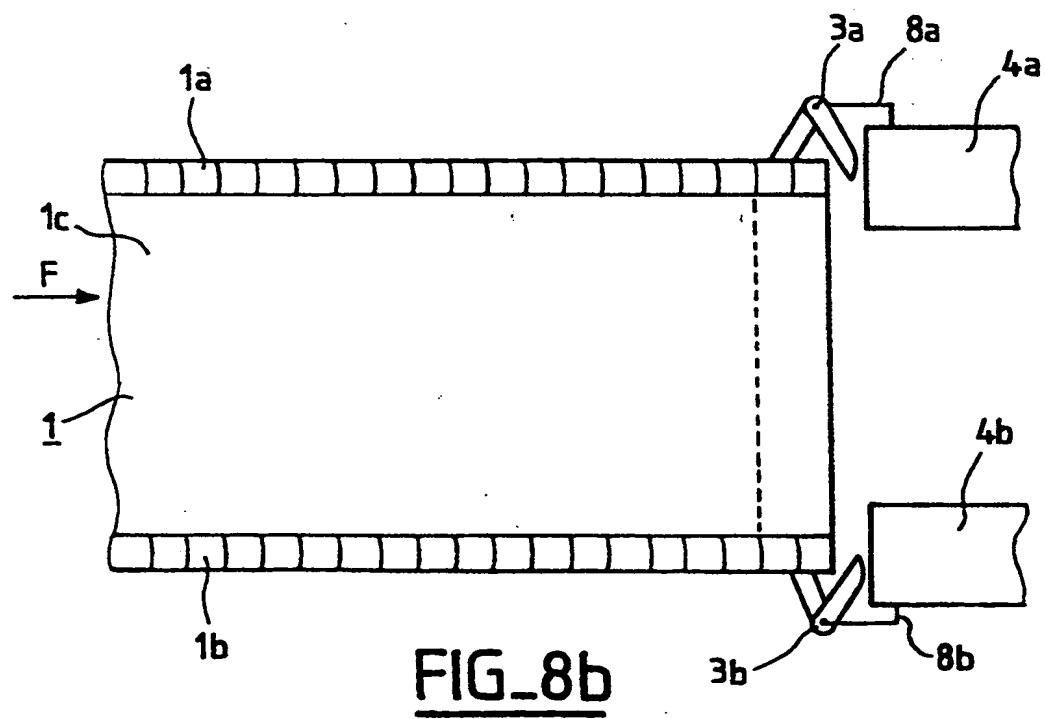
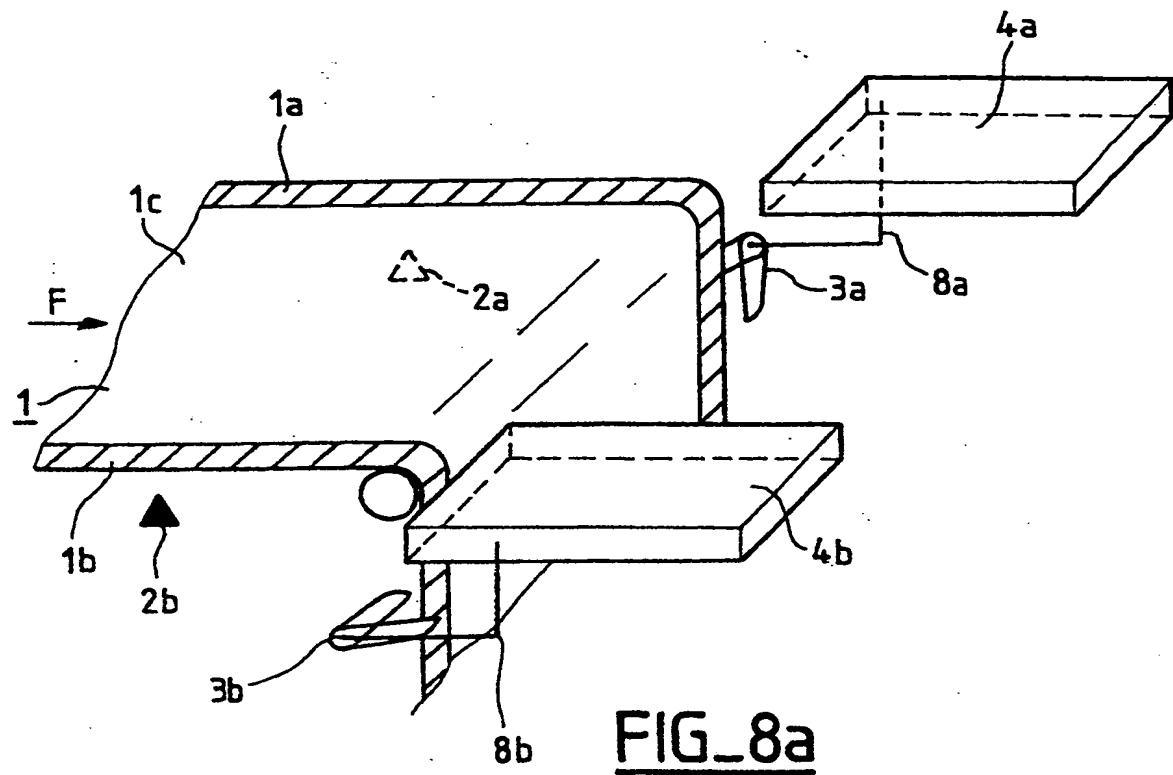
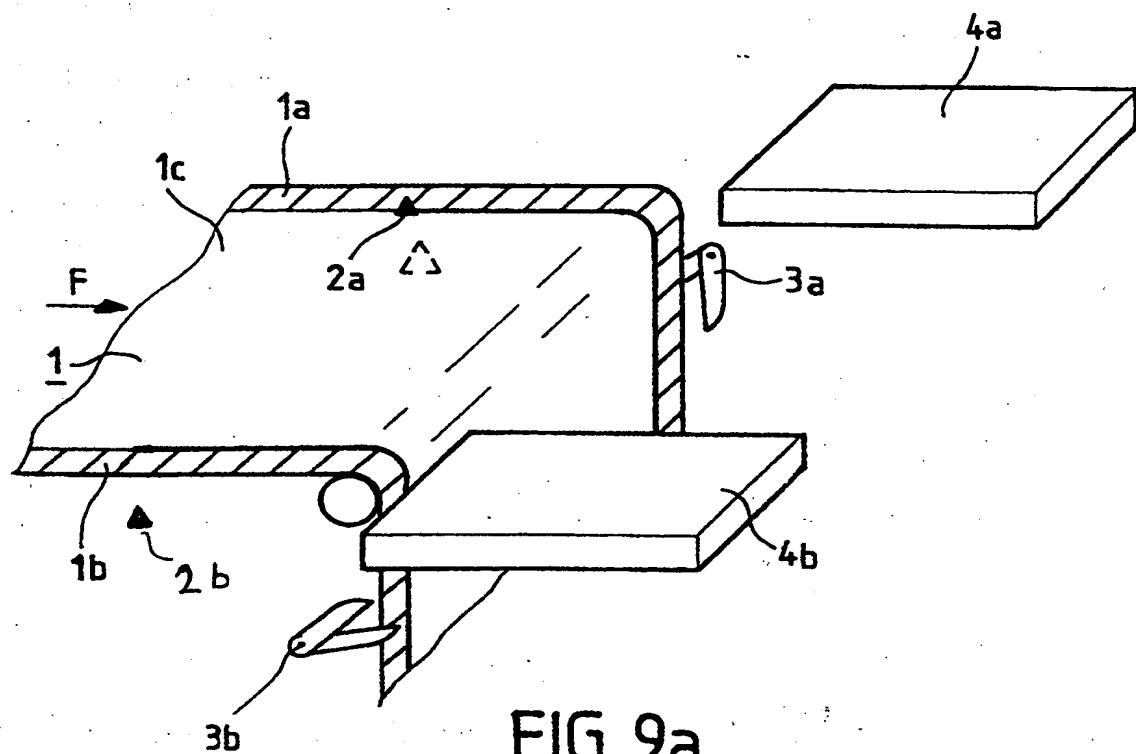
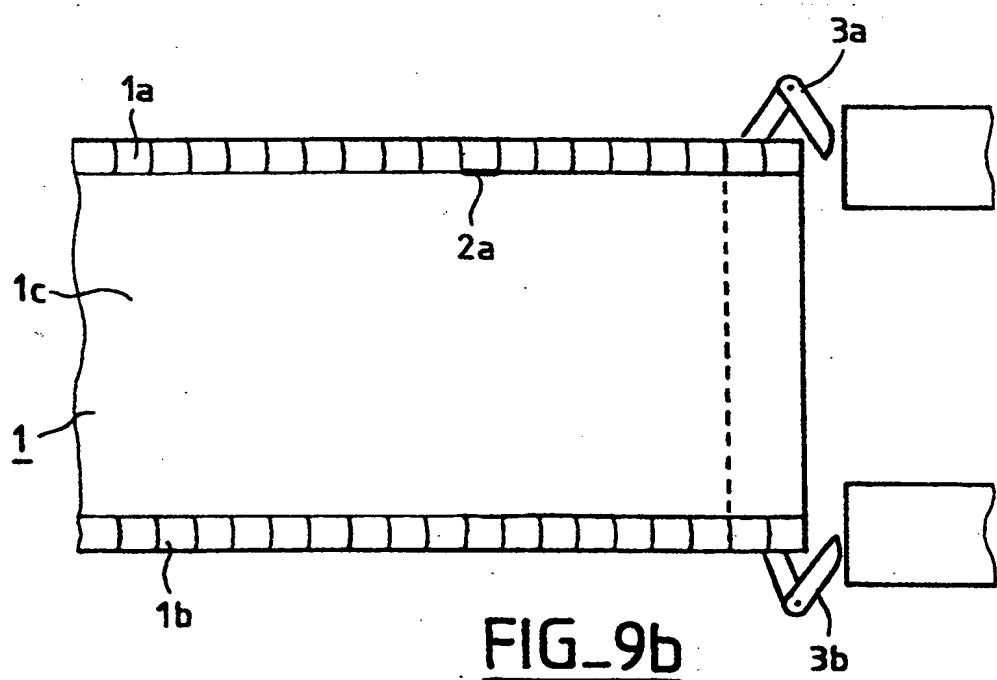


FIG. 7b

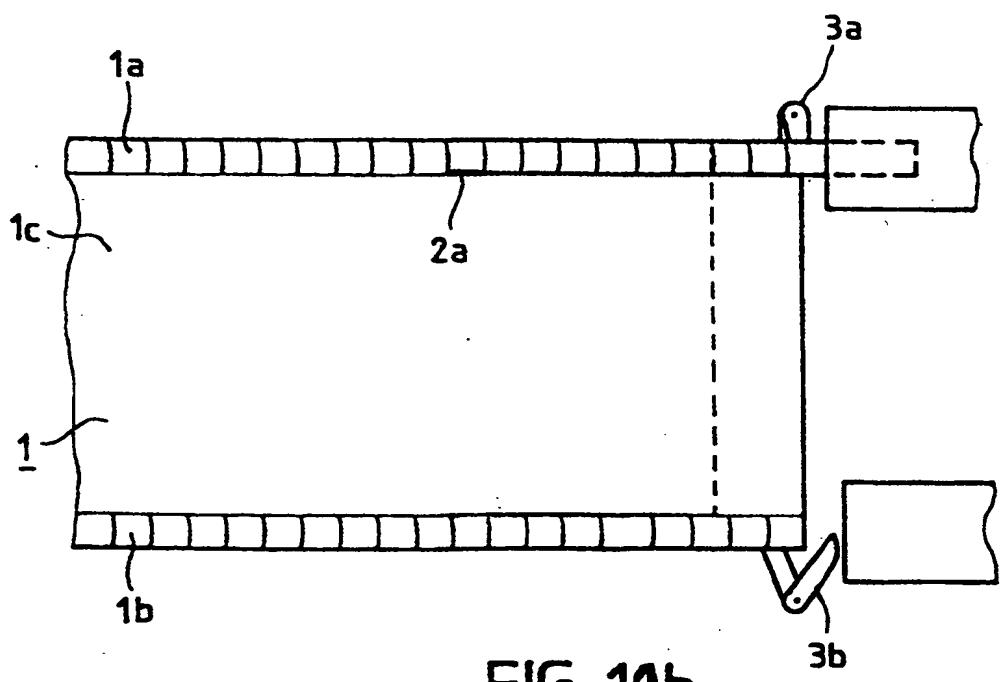
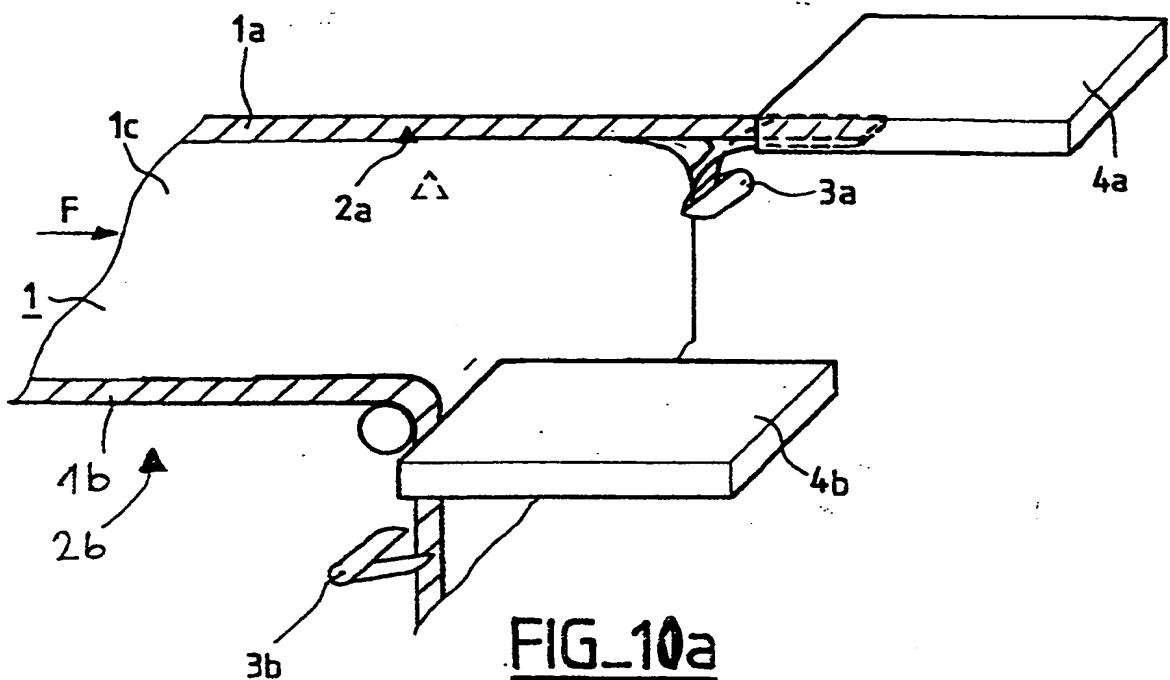


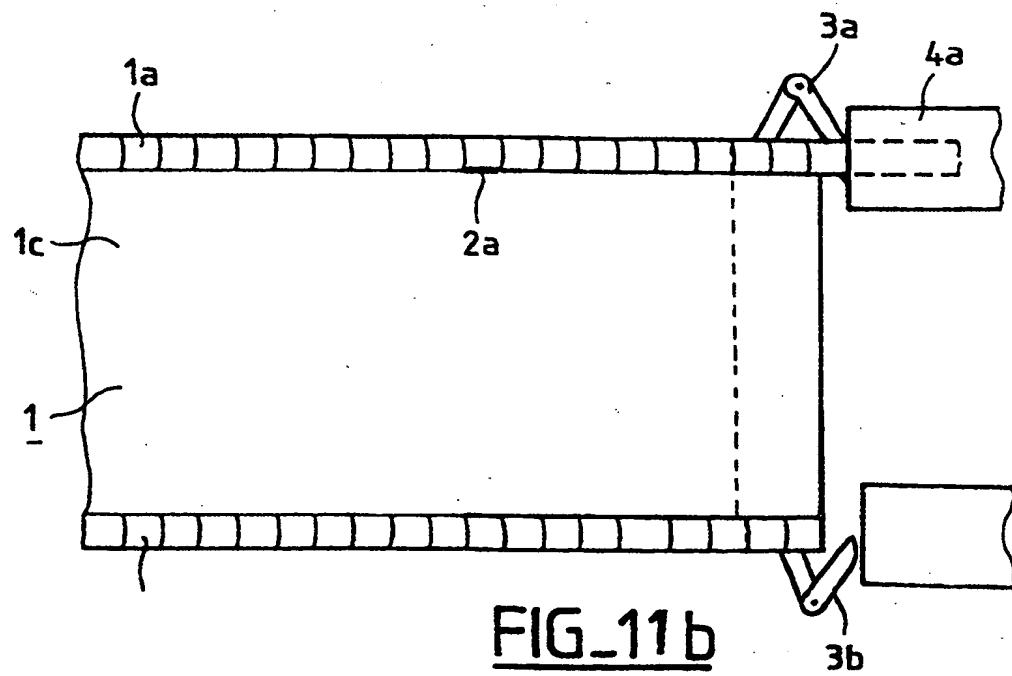
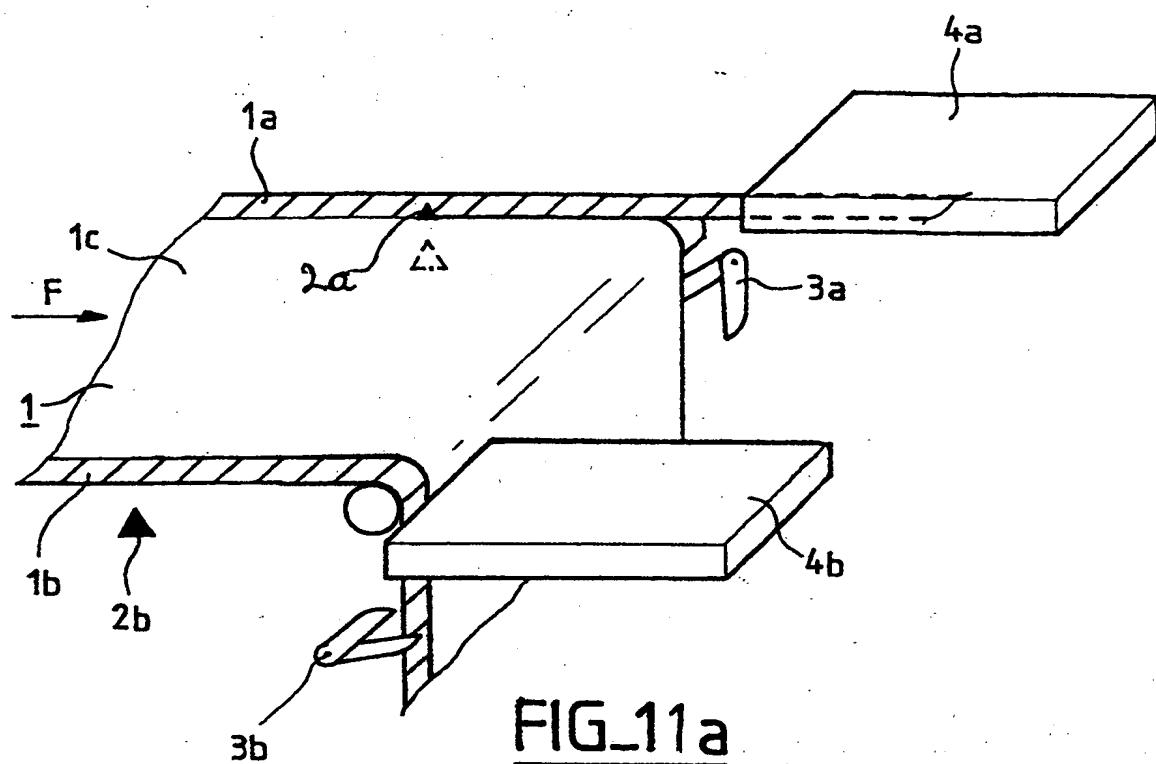


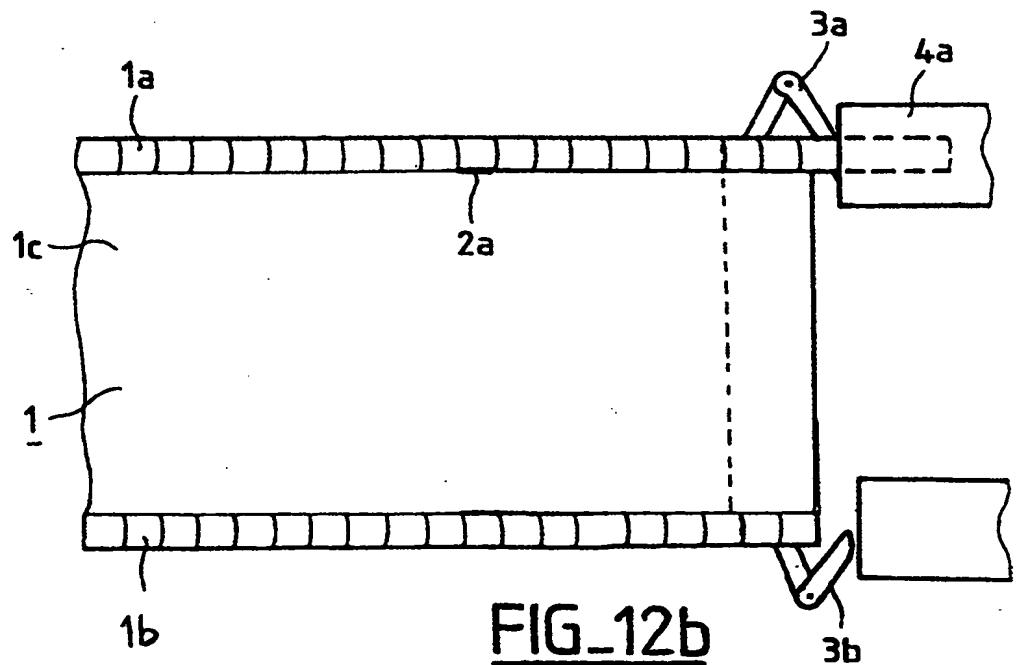
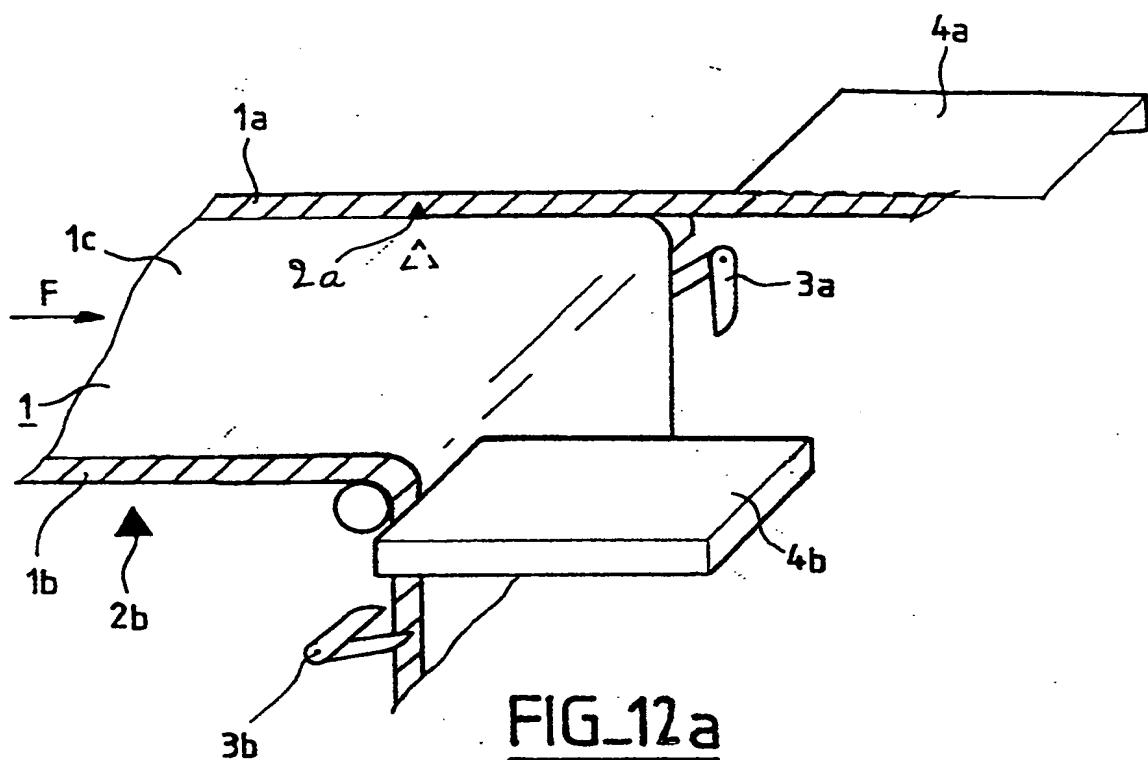
FIG_9a

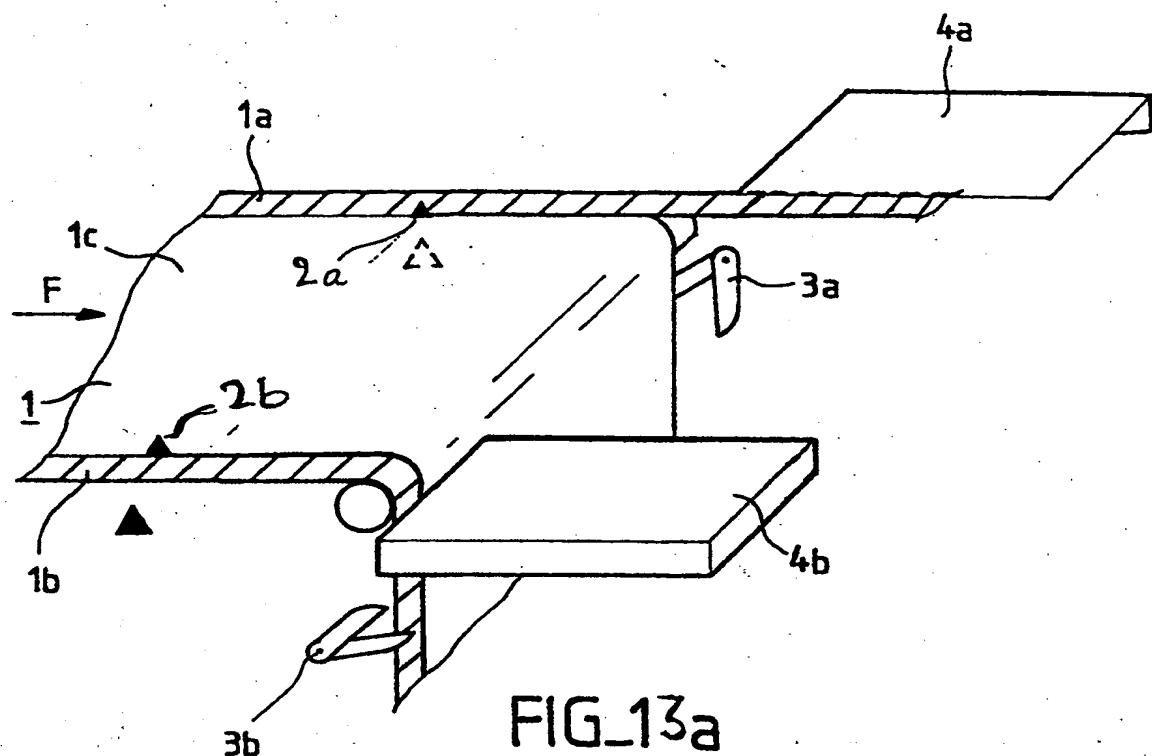


FIG_9b

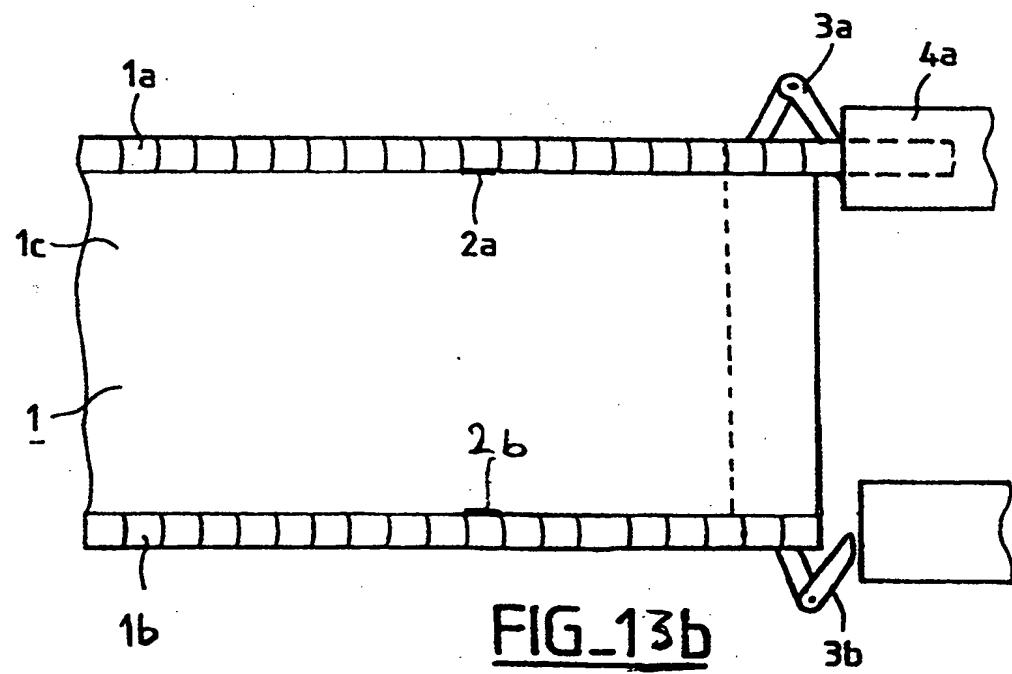




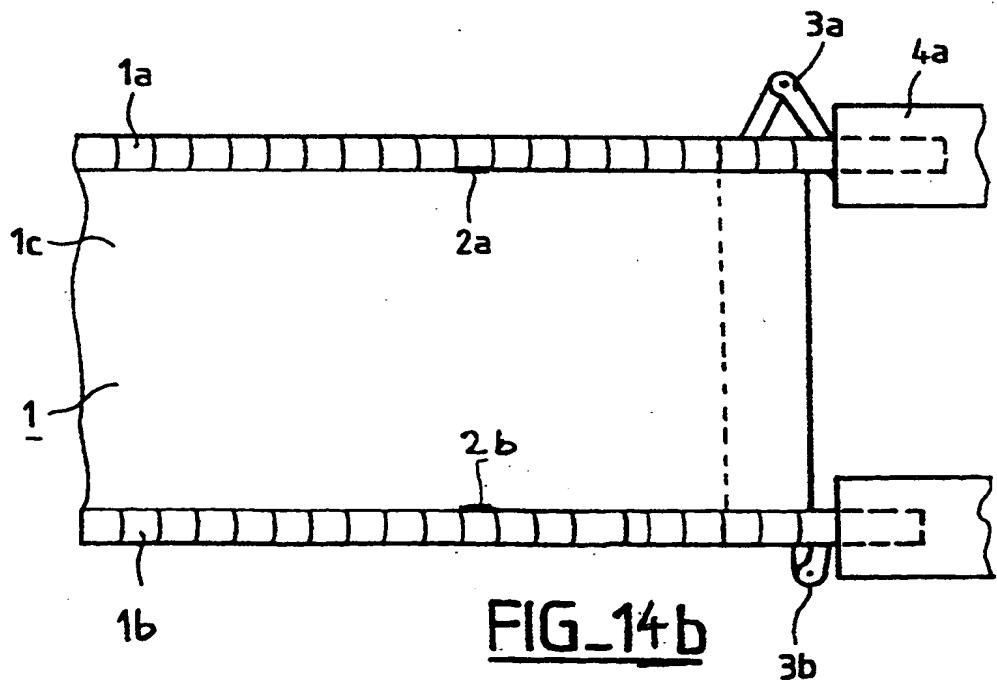
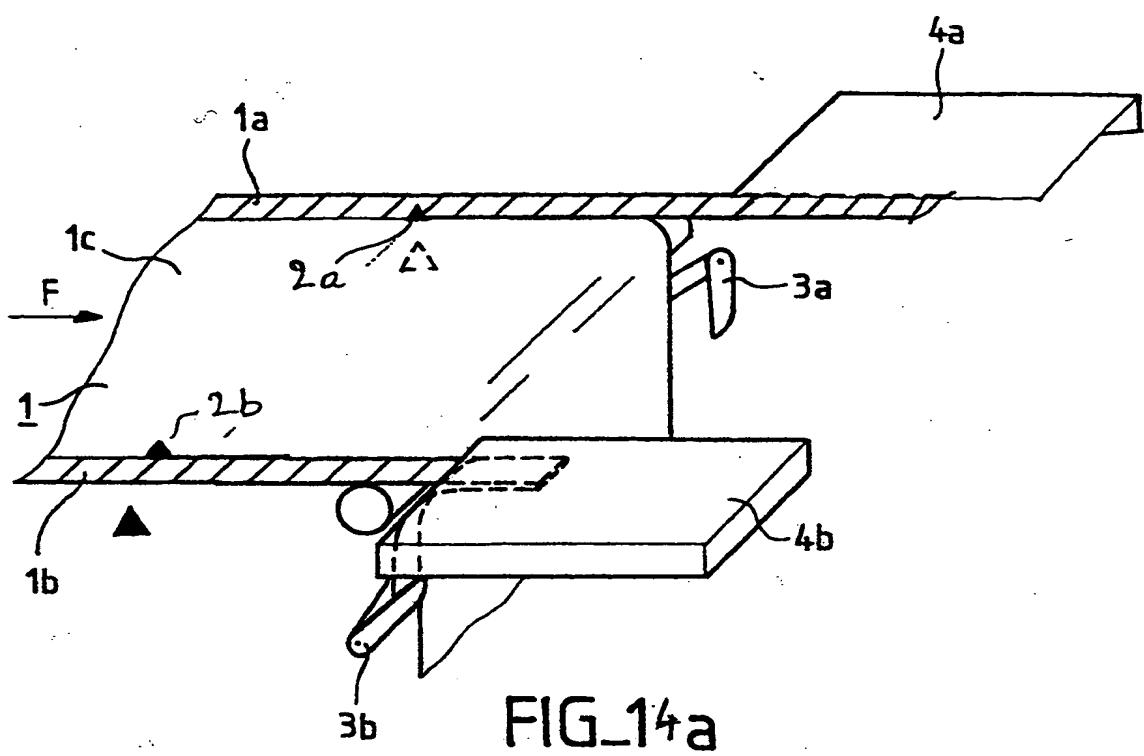


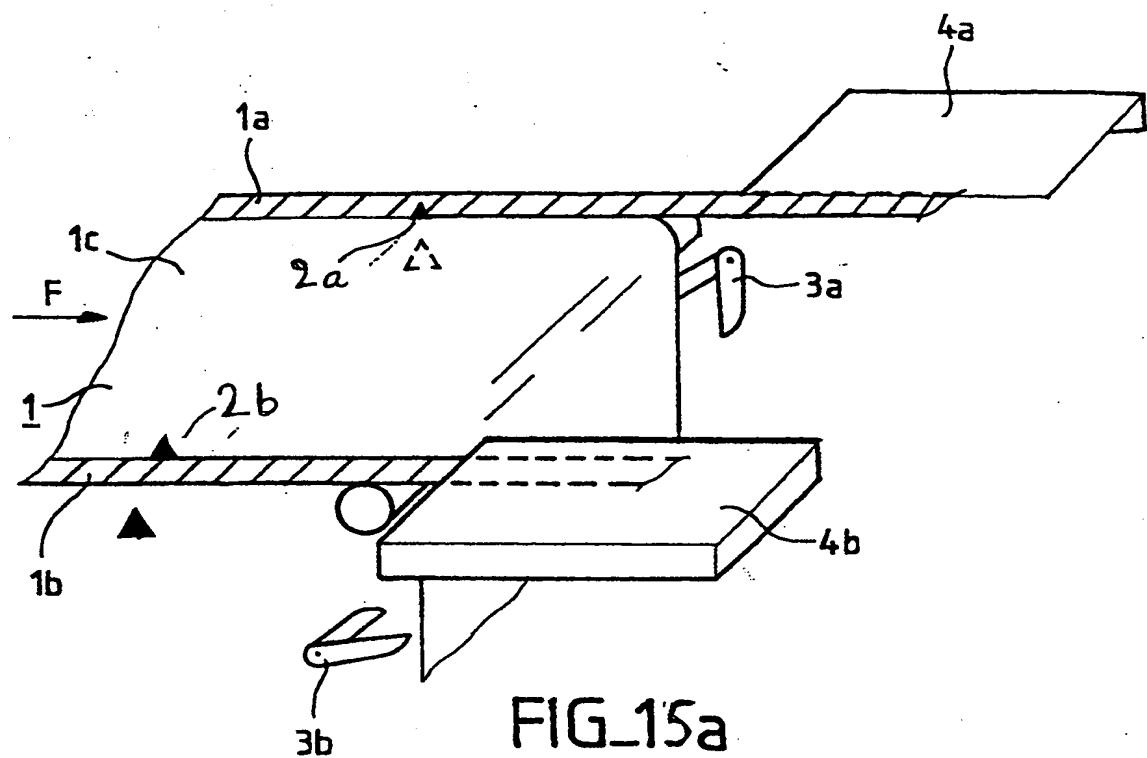


FIG_13a

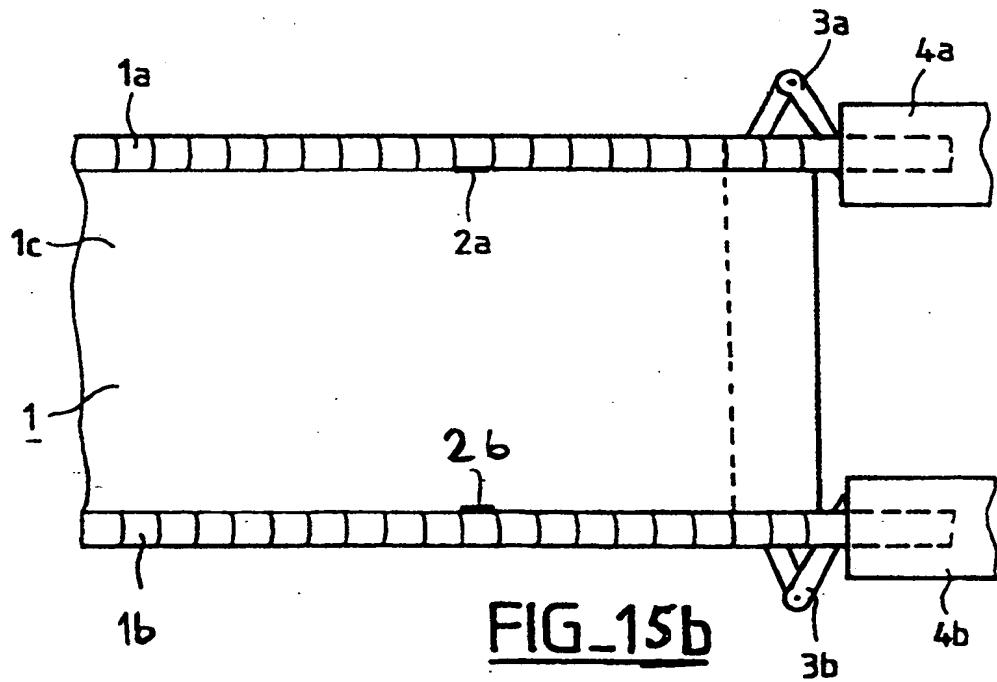


FIG_13b

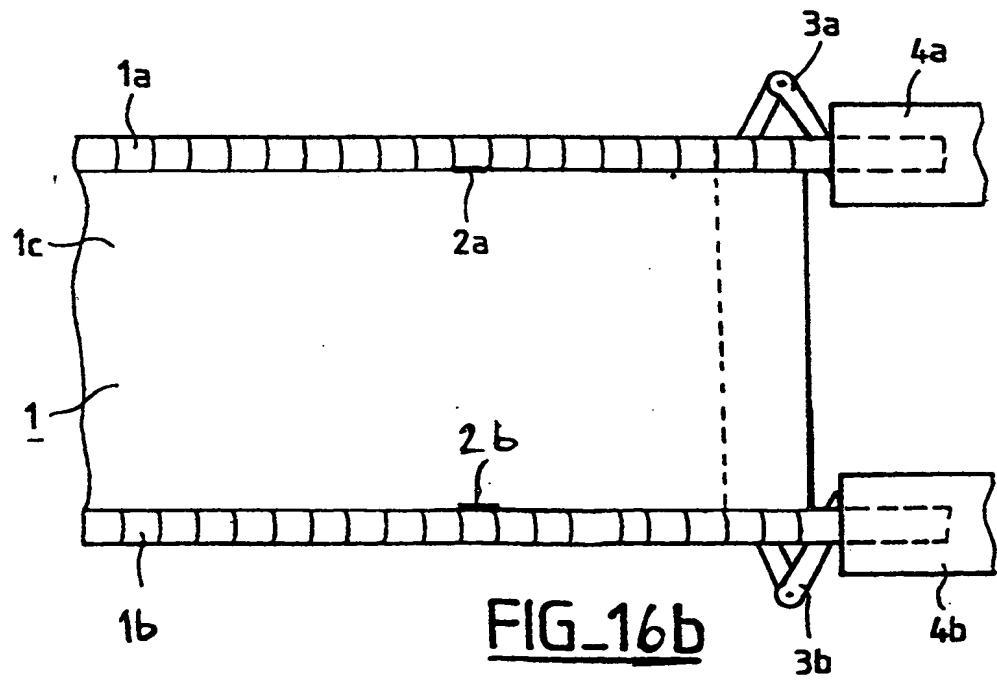
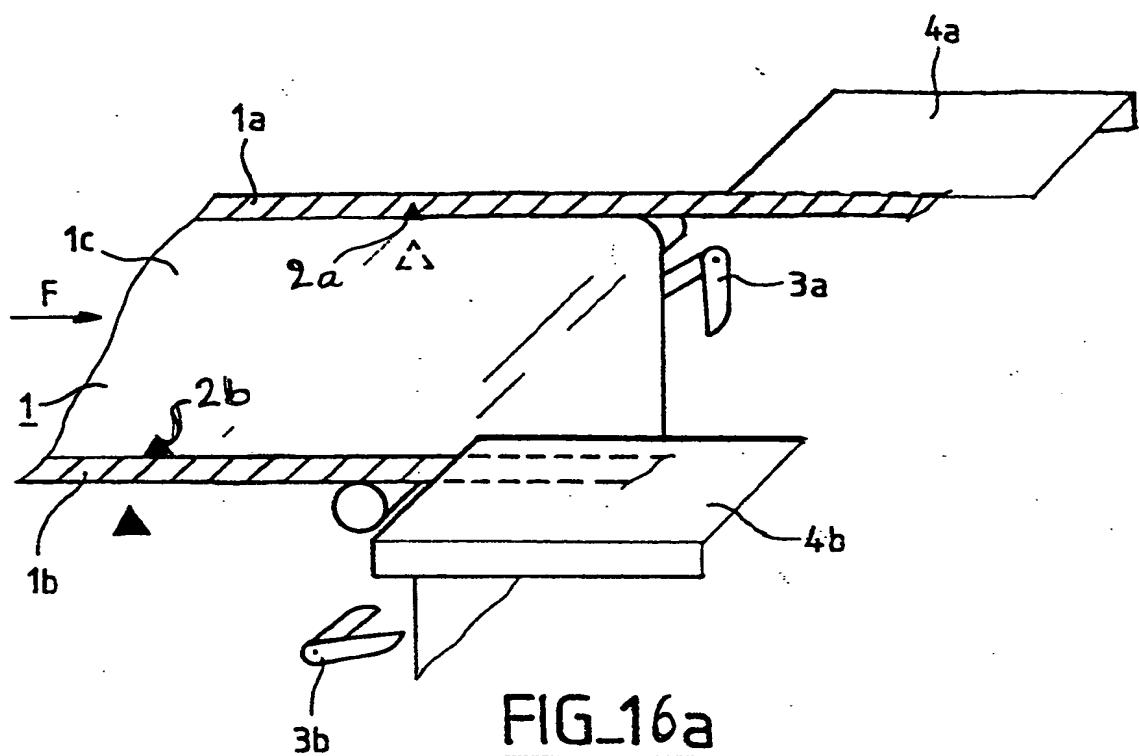


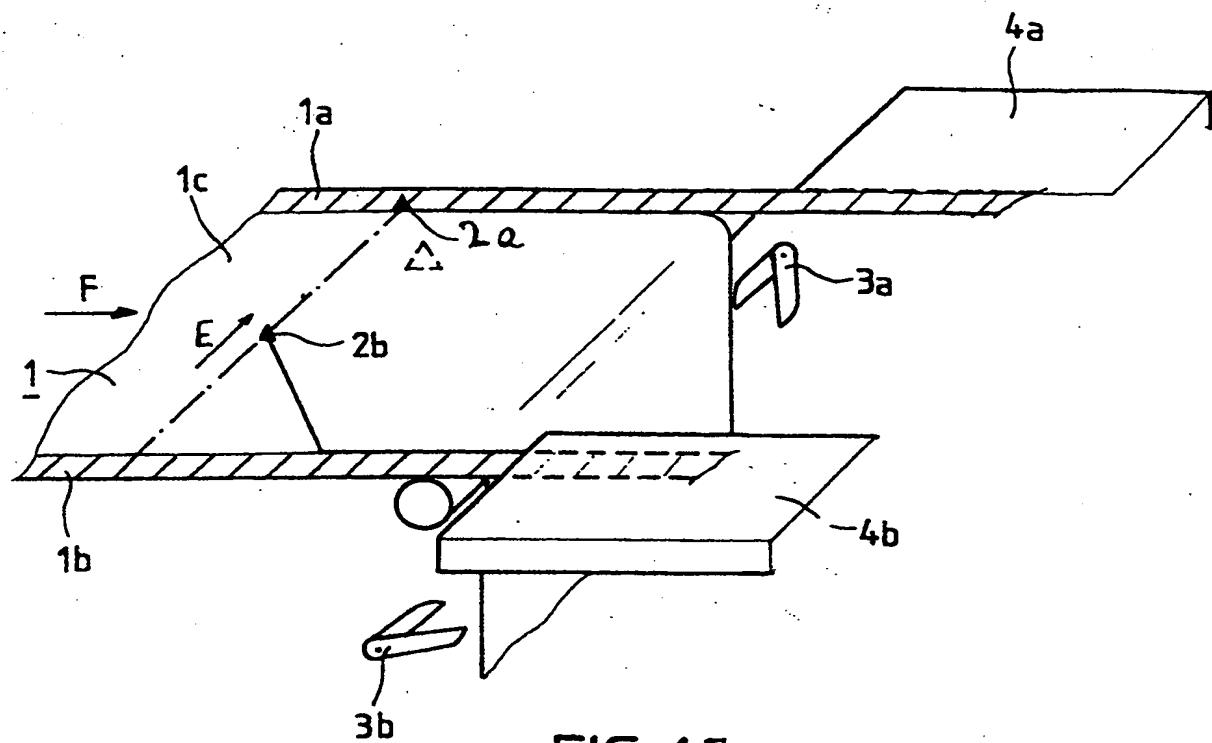


FIG_15a

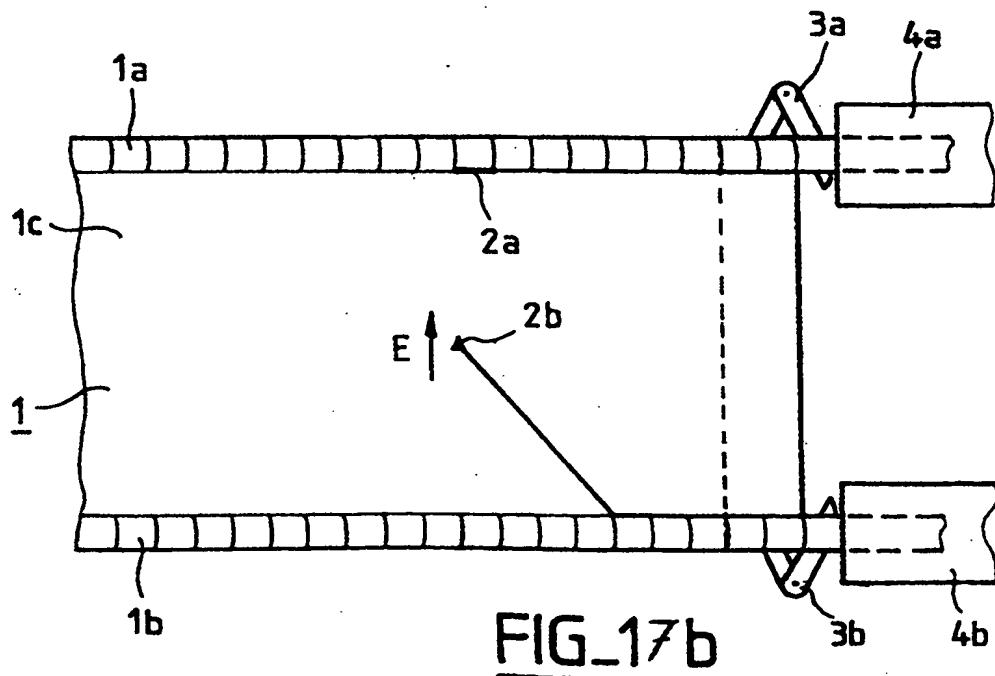


FIG_15b

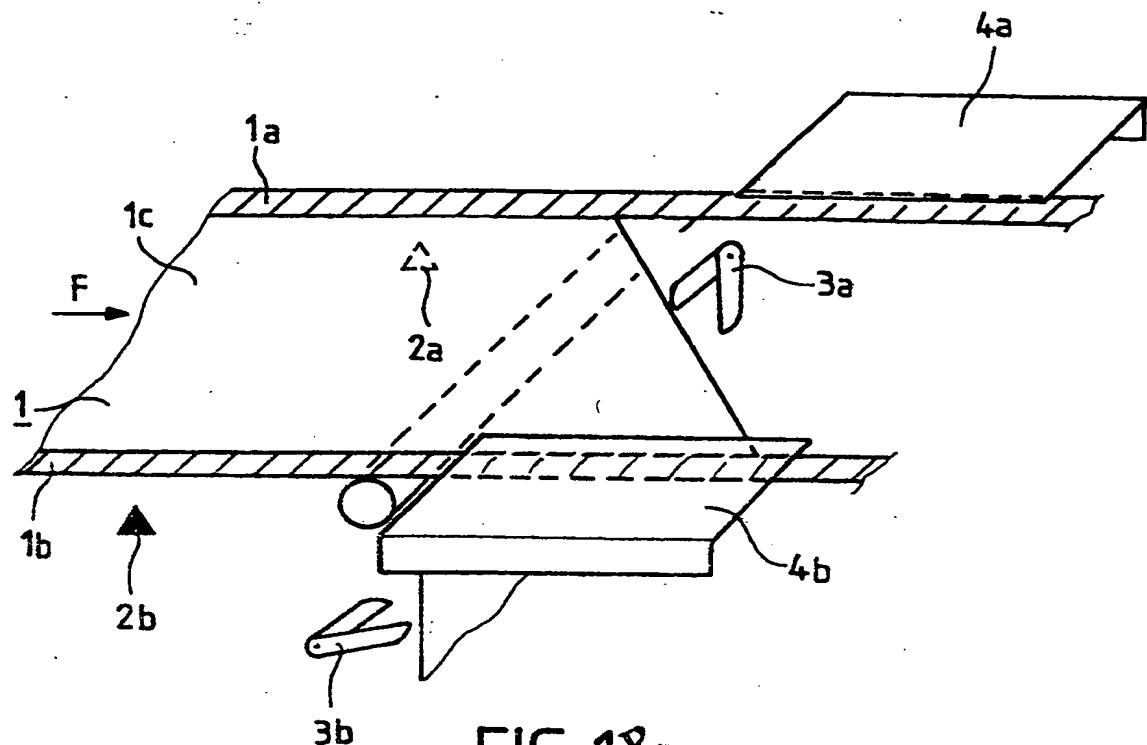




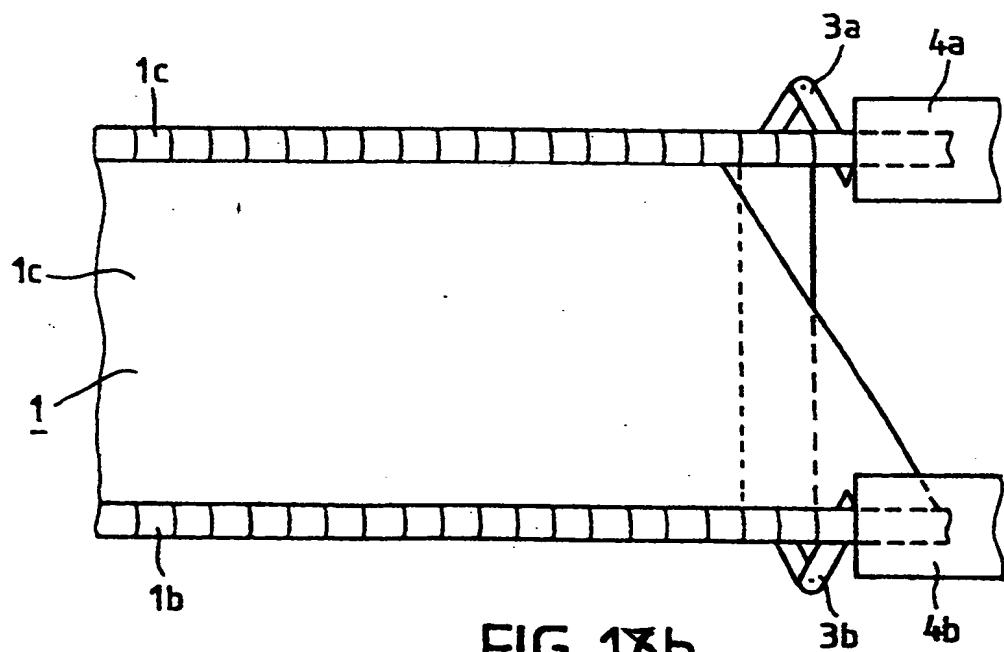
FIG_17a



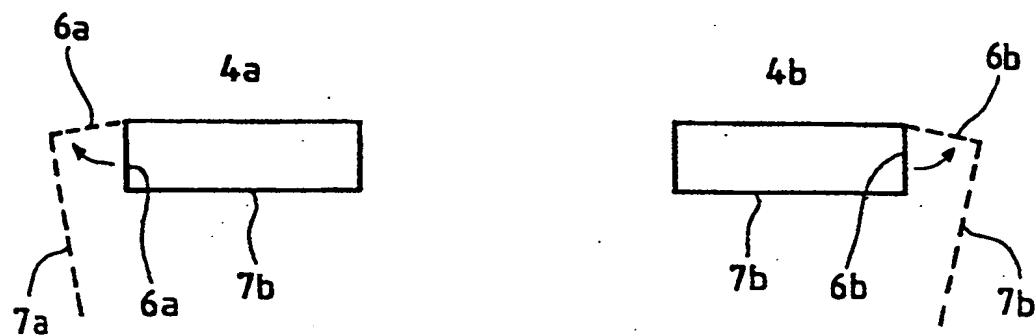
FIG_17b



FIG_18a



FIG_18b



FIG_19

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internal Application No
PCT/EP 00758

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 6 B65H20/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 B65H D21G F268

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 3 756 527 A (DU PONT DE NEMOURS) 4 September 1973 cited in the application	
A	US 3 743 197 A (DU PONT DE NEMOURS) 3 July 1973 cited in the application	

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Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

7 June 1999

14/06/1999

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Authorized officer

Loncke, J

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Internal Application No

PCT/99/00758

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